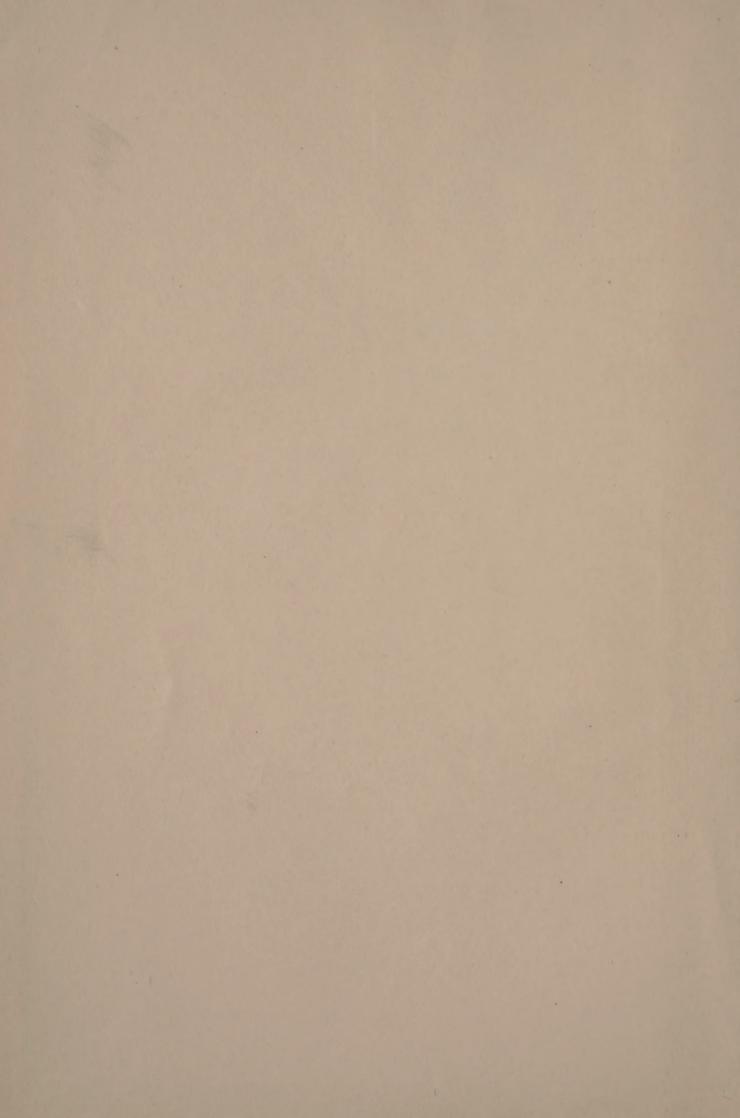
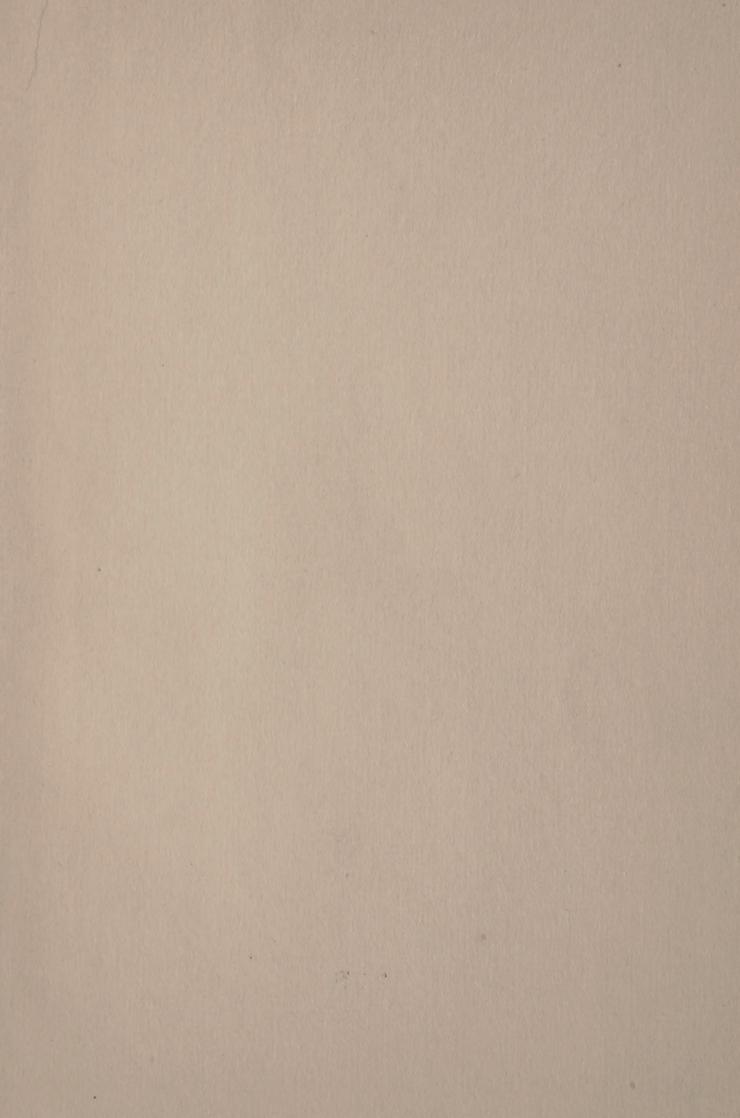


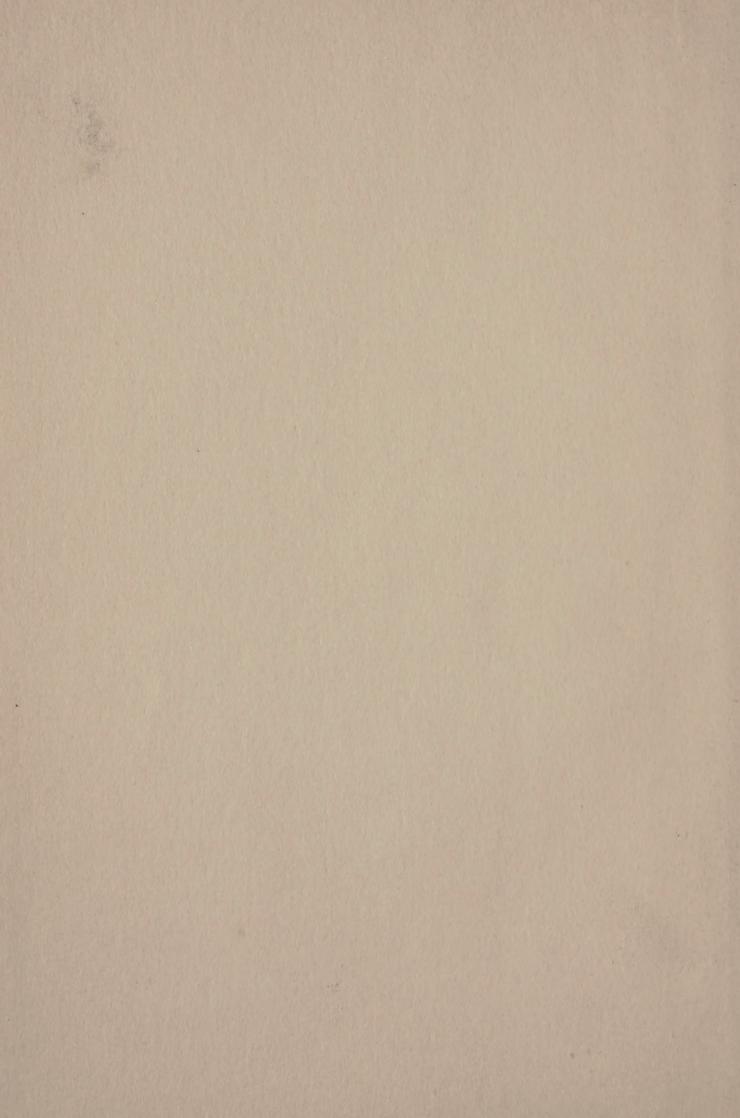
GRANDPA'S LITTLE GIRLS GROWN UP ALICE TURNER CURTIS

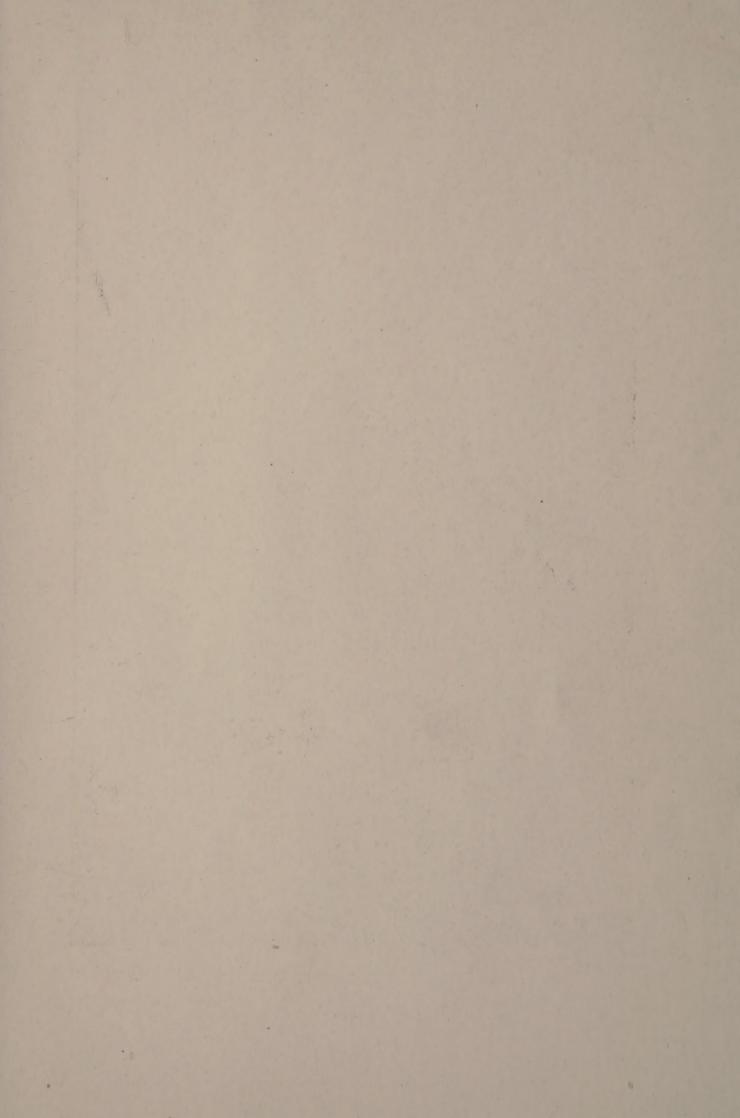






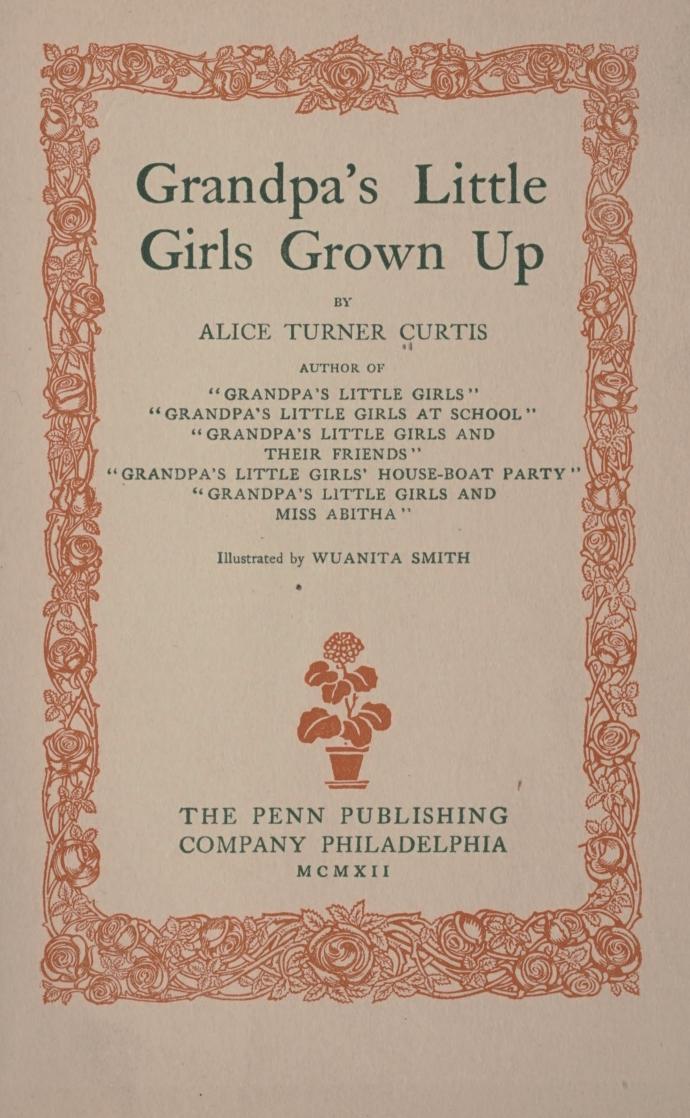








"IT'S TOO LOVELY HERE TO THINK OF SCHOOL"



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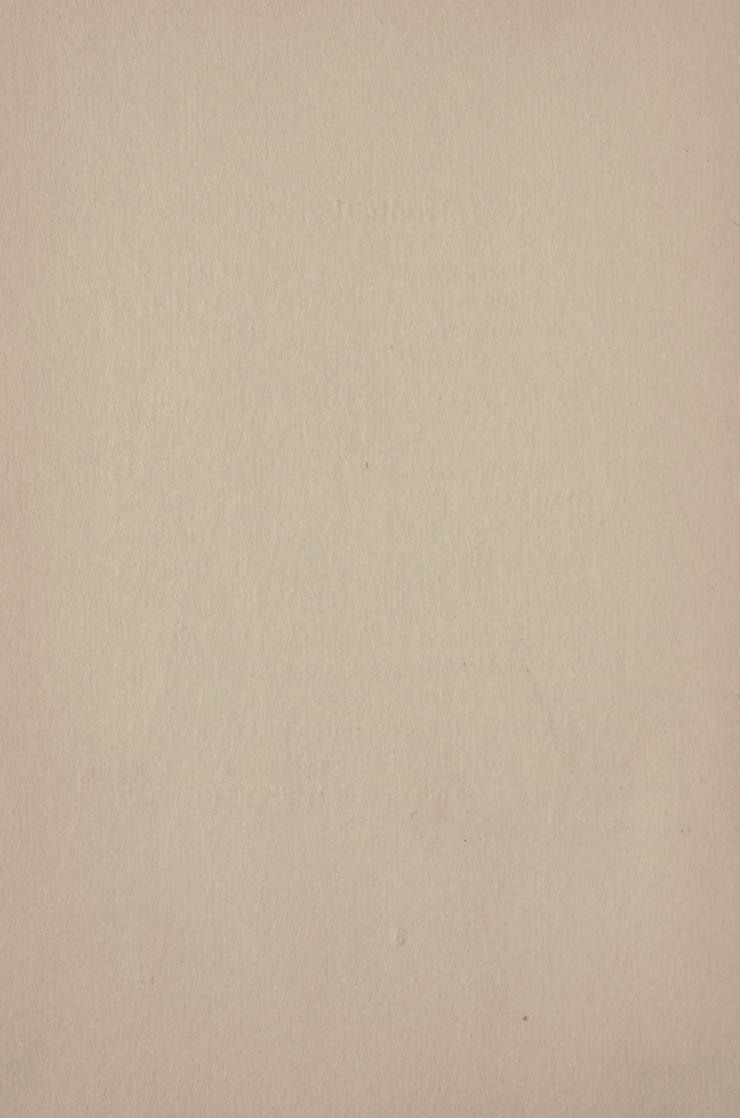
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Introduction

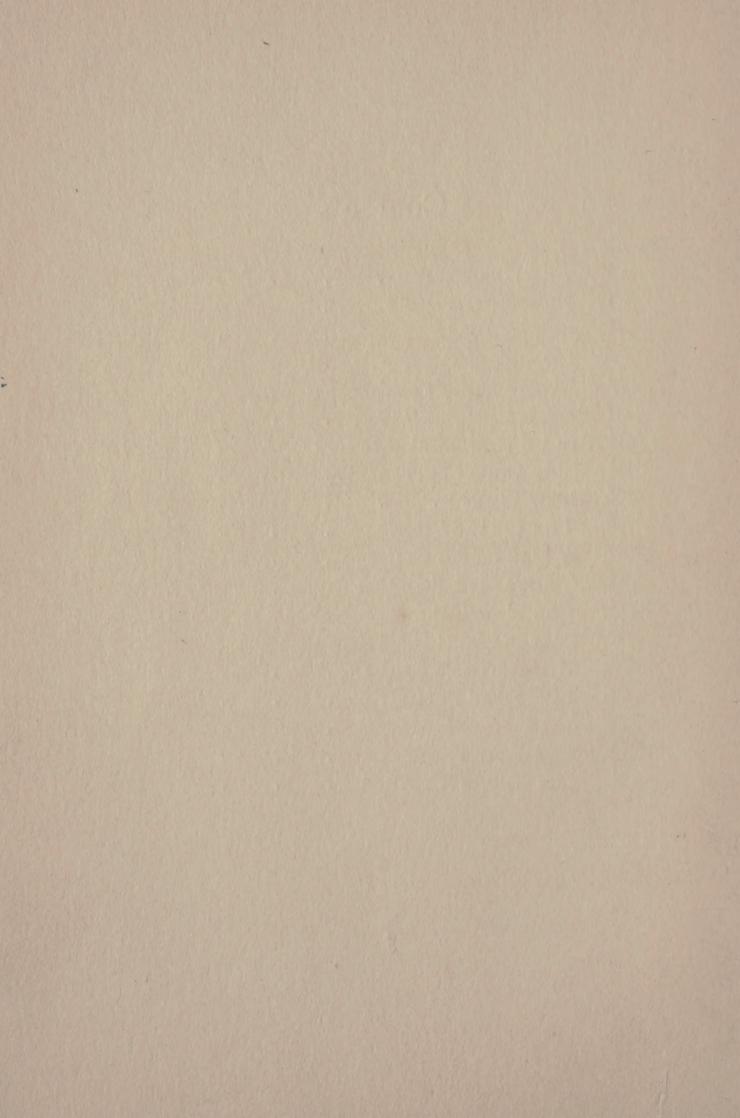
THOSE who have read the earlier books of this series, "Grandpa's Little Girls," "Grandpa's Little Girls at School," "Grandpa's Little Girls and Their Friends," "Grandpa's Little Girls' Houseboat Party," and "Grandpa's Little Girls and Miss Abitha," will remember that the stories began with the Newman girls, Constance and Eunice, on their grandfather's farm in Maine. It was there that they made the acquaintance of Miss Abitha Bean, her father, and the Woodyear family. Some of the other friends named in this story were schoolmates at Miss Wilson's school.

The little girls are big girls now, and with all their good times, have learned very easily a great deal that once seemed hard to them. They now smile at children who are doing the same things that they used to do. But it is quite likely that at Pine Tree Farm Constance and Eunice are regarded still as "Grandpa's Little Girls."



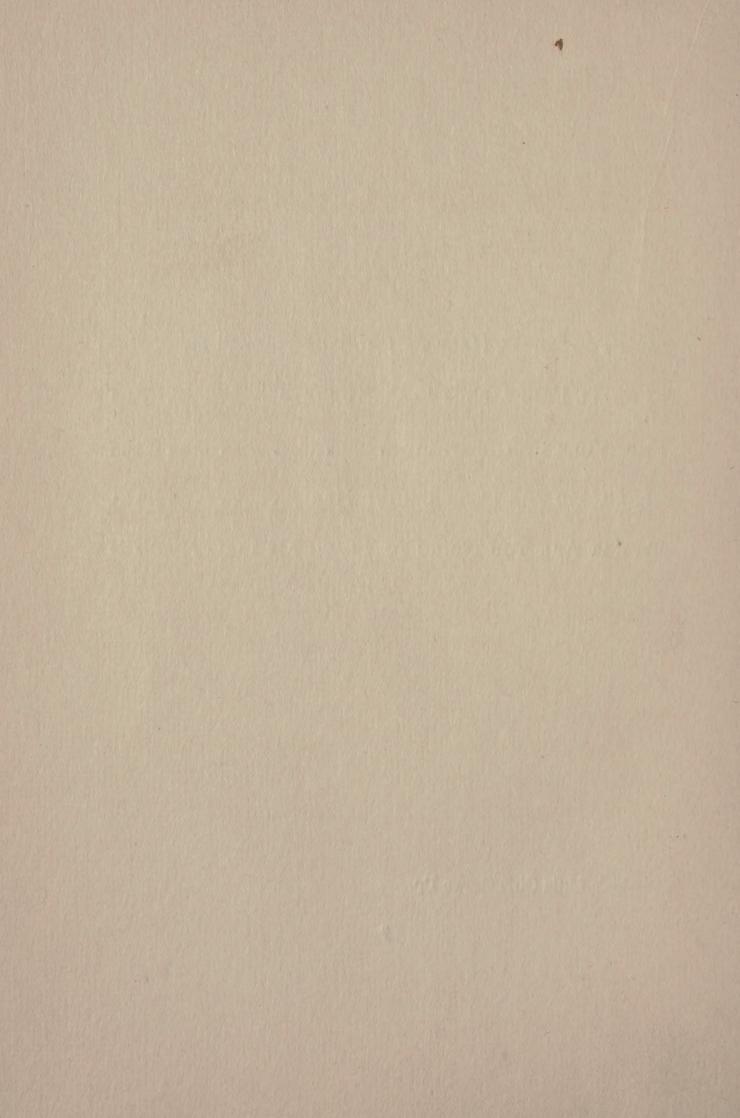
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Grandpa's Little Girls Grown Up

CHAPTER I

THE UNEXPECTED

"Isn't this lovely!" exclaimed Eunice Newman, as she and her sister Constance walked down toward the river from Pine Tree Farm. "It does seem as if this was going to be the best summer of any summer in our whole lives, and that would be saying a good deal, wouldn't it, Sister?"

"I should say so," responded Constance heartily; "but there will be all sorts of things to do this summer. You know Mrs. Smith wants Carl to have a good time on his vacation, and she will arrange for picnics and all sorts of good times."

"I shouldn't think his High-mightiness would condescend to picnics," said Eunice. "I used to like Carl before he went to college, but when I have seen him during the last year he has treated me as if I were about six."

"And you really are sixteen," said Constance.

"Grandpa's little girls are grown up," said Eunice with a happy little laugh, slipping her hand under her sister's arm.

Constance smiled down upon her. She was much taller than Eunice, and Grandpa Newman sometimes told her that she would surely be as tall as Miss Abitha, the good friend and neighbor, who was six feet in height.

"We can't do just the same things we did when we were little girls," continued Lamb more seriously. "Lamb" was the home name for Eunice, who had been named for her Grandmother Newman, and although the family often declared that she was too old to be called by her baby name, still they continued to use it now and then.

"We don't want to," responded Constance. "I have all I can do this summer with my studies, and from what mother told me I think that you are planning for a busy summer, too."

"Yes," said Eunice. "I was wondering this morning if I hadn't undertaken a good deal, but Miss Abitha says that the way to learn to do anything is to do it, and father has promised to help me."

Eunice had indeed undertaken no small task. She was to have complete charge of the dairy of Pine Tree

Farm. There was a fine herd of Jersey cattle, and a certain amount of milk was sold. The remainder was set for cream, and made into butter. Grandmother Newman was a famous butter-maker and Eunice was eager to possess an equal skill.

"It will seem pretty lonesome when you go, Sister," continued Eunice, as the two girls turned into the shady wood-path leading down to the river. "Just think of your really being a 'schoolma'am'! I can hear you say 'Young ladies, we will now take up the subject of the Arts of Ancient Greece,' and Eunice endeavored to look very dignified and serious. "And while you are teaching I shall be making butter and testing milk here at home. It's lucky I studied chemistry, and mathematics, too. I really believe that everything one learns at school is needed on a farm."

"Let's sit here," suggested Constance, stopping near a moss-covered log and seating herself upon it. Lamb sank down on the moss beside her, and for a moment the sisters were silent, looking through the opening among the trees toward the river. The sun flickered down through the branches, making silvery dancing shadows upon the moss-covered ground. They could hear the soft lap-lap of the water against the shore, and now and then a wood-thrush sent its bubbling, happy song echoing through the air. Every breath was filled with June fragrance, the blossoming laurel, the elderberry blooms, and all the woodland odors of early summer which are the promise of sunny days to come.

"It's too lovely here to think of school or dairy or anything else," said Constance, with a little sigh.

"But we must," urged Eunice, with a little laugh, "although I can hardly imagine girls calling you 'Miss Newman,' and watching everything you do and talking about it as we used to talk about the teachers."

Constance sighed again. "It's a great responsibility to teach girls," she said gravely. "When I think of my own foolishness when I first went away to school I don't know how I have the courage to teach other girls."

"But Rose Mason was a fine teacher, and I know you will be," declared Lamb loyally.

"Rose was always fine about everything," responded Constance. "When she was younger than you, Eunice, she knew just what to do. Don't you remember our first year at Miss Wilson's? Why, Rose taught me more important things than I learned from books."

"I remember," nodded Eunice; "about being fair, and not making things hard for others. Probably

there's some such girl as Rose studying at Miss Wilson's school now, and that will make it easier, Sister."

"That would be expecting too much good fortune," said Constance; "but I'd rather teach than do anything else, and Miss Abitha says that is a sign I can do it well. And I shall try."

Lamb reached up and clasped her sister's hand. "You'll succeed," she declared.

The two girls made a pretty picture as they sat there, the June sunshine falling about them. Constance, tall and slender, with her smooth, brown hair, delicate skin, and earnest eyes, was perhaps the prettier of the two girls; but there was much to attract one in the younger girl with her sturdy frame, ruddy cheeks, and curling hair.

"Do you suppose we shall ever see Rose again now that she is married?" asked Lamb.

Rose Mason, several years Constance's senior, and her dearest friend, had been a pupil at Miss Wilson's school, and then a teacher in a town in the western part of the state. She had recently married a young professor in a Western college, and was now settled in her new home. It had been hard for Constance to think that Rose would no longer come to Pine Tree Farm for all her vacations, and that their friendship

must give way to stronger ties, but Mr. and Mrs. Newman had heartily approved of the marriage. Prof. Robert Marshall was a young man who had earned his position, and he and Rose were deeply attached to each other.

"I hope my girls will be as wise when they select husbands," Mrs. Newman had said, and Lamb had promptly replied that she and Constance intended to be just like Miss Abitha Bean and never marry, and always live at Pine Tree Farm. A decision which Grandpa Newman declared to be wise and desirable.

"Of course we shall see Rose," Constance replied to her sister's question. "Mother has promised that I shall visit her at the Easter vacation; you know it's always a month, and that would give me at least three weeks with 'Professor and Mrs. Marshall.'"

"But that doesn't mean I shall see her," said Eunice.

"They are both to come and visit us the first time they come East," Constance reminded her.

"And who knows when that will be?" said Lamb gloomily. "Dear me, I do think it is a pretty serious business to grow up," and she stood up, shaking out her crisp gingham skirt. "Come, Sister, I have work to attend to. I have to figure out the percentage of cream due from the amount of milk received this morning. And I have to see to it that the dairy is at the right temperature. We have loafed away the whole morning."

Constance laughed at her sister's serious tone. "Never mind, dear, we are just beginning to be 'grown up,' you know, and so we can waste an hour or two if we wish to."

"I don't believe Mary Woodyear ever wastes an hour," said Lamb, as they turned back to the house. "If she sits down she always picks up some sewing; shirts for Dannie, or a dress for her small sister. But then, Mary has always been grown up."

"Like Rose," said Constance. "Has Mary told you what she is planning to do?"

"No," said Lamb a little fearfully. For she thought a great deal of Mary, and she was afraid that Mary might be thinking of leaving home.

"She is going to raise chickens," said Constance.

"Oh!" and there was visible relief in that brief expression; "but she has always raised chickens."

"Not as a real business. Mary is going into chickenraising just as I am teaching and as you are learning dairy work. It's the way she is going to earn her living. The boys are going to build her a chickenhouse, and Jimmie is going to lend her the price of an incubator. She has studied about the right kind of foods, and means to make that her business. She will have a good market for eggs and young chickens, and she told me yesterday that she thought raising chickens would be more interesting than teaching," and Constance laughed at the idea that anything could be more interesting than teaching.

"Look, Constance." Eunice had stopped suddenly, and was pointing toward a team which stood near the front gate. "What is Dr. Smith here for?"

"Just for a friendly call, I suppose," answered Constance, remembering as she spoke that the busy doctor never had time for friendly calls. The girls walked more rapidly, and as they neared the road began to run. They were both afraid, they hardly knew of what.

As they reached the gate Grandpa Newman came down the path to meet them. He looked grave and anxious.

"What is it, grandpa; what is the matter?" asked Constance.

"Your father was driving the sorrel colt, and it bolted and threw him out. He is unconscious. Your mother and the doctor are with him. You must be brave girls," he concluded with a little break in his own voice; "you must be brave; remember you are nearly grown up."

CHAPTER II

NEW DUTIES

"What can we do, grandpa?" asked Constance, with a little break in her voice, as they entered the house.

"All we can do just now, my dear girl, is to wait and hear what the doctor has to say. After that there will be enough for all of us to do, especially for you girls. Your grandmother not being well, and Miss Abitha away, it will mean that a great deal of work and responsibility will be your share if your father is confined to his room and needs your mother's undivided care."

"You don't think——" Eunice hesitated, and looked anxiously into her grandfather's face. He understood, and put his arm about her as he answered the unspoken question:

"That he is dangerously injured? I cannot think so."

Eunice gave a startled exclamation. "Grandma must not know that father is hurt," she whispered. "Don't you remember that Dr. Smith said that any un-

pleasant shock might be the worst possible thing for her?"

"And we laughed at the idea that there could be any unpleasant shock at Pine Tree Farm," said Constance.

"It is time for grandmother to have her cup of warm milk," continued Eunice, "and I will go and fix it for her. It is lucky her room is in the back of the house. She can't have heard any disturbance."

"But she doesn't stay in her room all the time, and father is always running up-stairs to see her if she doesn't come down," Constance reminded them.

"Go and fix the milk, Lamb, and stay with your grandmother until I come up. She will have to know of Henry's accident, but I will tell her, and perhaps his injuries may be slight after all."

Eunice hurried away to the kitchen. The fire in the range had died out. The vegetables which were to have been cooked for dinner lay in a basket on the table; there was an air of desertion and disorder in the usually bright and tidy room which gave the young girl a new sense of depression.

"There must be dinner for grandpa and mother," she said aloud, putting on a checked gingham apron which she took from a narrow little closet in the corner.

"And the first step toward a good dinner is a good fire, Miss Abitha says. How I do wish she was here," and Eunice almost sobbed as she began rebuilding the fire. She had just prepared the warm milk when her grandfather came into the kitchen.

"I'll take it up," he said gently. "I have seen the doctor, and have just sent Jimmie to the station to telegraph to Portland for Dr. Drew. Your father's right leg is broken, and there is a broken rib. Dr. Smith wishes to consult with another physician, and we must have a nurse to relieve your mother."

"Oh, grandpa!" sobbed Lamb.

"You must be a brave girl," her grandfather reminded her. "This does not mean that your father is in danger, but it does mean that he will have a good deal of pain to bear, and that he will need constant care and attention. It means, too, that the comfort of all of us will largely depend on you and Constance. Your mother's hands will be more than full. With Miss Abitha away I do not know of any one on whom we can depend for help. It is going to be hard for you," and Grandpa Newman's face was a little sad as he looked down at Eunice.

"We'll do our best," she responded; "don't you worry about Sister and me, or about the work. I know

we can do it. Poor father!" and again the tears came into her eyes.

Grandpa Newman took the little tray from the table, and went up the stairs to tell grandma the unfortunate news as best he could, and as he left the kitchen by one door Constance entered at the other. Her eyes were red, but she smiled bravely at Eunice.

"The first duty is the next thing, isn't it? You know how Miss Wilson used to preach that to us at school and how stupid we thought it sounded; but I begin to see that there is a lot in it, and the next thing just now is dinner, isn't it?"

"I don't believe anybody wants to eat," said Lamb dolefully.

"Yes, indeed. Dr. Smith will want to eat, and the rest of us must. We must all do the right thing and keep well, so that we can take care of father."

Already Constance had found her apron, and was examining the basket of vegetables. "Lettuce and fresh radishes. Not much trouble about those. Asparagus and potatoes. Those are easy, and I know that mother intended to have cold roast beef to-day. We'll make a cracker pudding with lemon sauce, and have dinner ready at one. I know it will cheer grandpa a good deal to have things go on as usual."

"Can't I run up-stairs and see mother a minute?" asked Lamb.

Constance nodded, and Lamb sped away up-stairs and paused outside her father's room. Her mother and grandfather were inside with the doctor. She could hear her father's voice, then a moment of silence, and then Mrs. Newman opened the door and came out. Eunice thought how very white her mother looked. "Dear girl," Mrs. Newman whispered, "tell Constance the leg is set and that it is not so bad a break as we feared. Do you suppose you and Constance can get something ready for Dr. Smith's dinner? He will stay here until the nurse and Dr. Drew come."

"Father—father's going to get well?" faltered the girl.

"Of course he is." Mrs. Newman's voice was quite steady, and Lamb drew a long breath of relief. If her mother said so Lamb was satisfied. "I shall have to depend upon you and Constance to see that we are all fed," and Mrs. Newman smiled; and now the cloud lifted from Lamb's spirit. All was going to be well. She and Constance must do their best, and very soon, she felt sure, her father would be about as usual.

"You will eat some dinner, too, mother, won't you?" pleaded Eunice.

"Yes, indeed," said Mrs. Newman, "but not until grandpa has had his so he can be with your father. Now run down-stairs, dear," and Eunice hurried back to the kitchen.

"It's going to be all right," she announced as she came into the kitchen. "Mother is going to eat dinner. What on earth are you doing with that lettuce?" and she rushed toward Constance just in time to prevent her from putting it into a kettle of boiling water.

"I thought I had the asparagus!" explained Constance.

"Of all things!" Eunice's voice was sharper than usual. "I do think you might have your wits about you to-day, Constance," she continued; "the idea of boiling lettuce!"

"Well, I don't wear my apron wrong-side out, or bring out the starch to make pudding sauce with," retorted Constance.

"Of course I know better than to use starch for sugar," declared Eunice angrily; "you know I do, Constance Newman. I know twice as much about cooking as you ever knew, if you are older."

"Oh, stop, Lamb! We haven't any time to quarrel," said Constance. "I should think we had trouble

enough on hand without you doing all you can to make it harder."

"Of course it's all my fault," began Lamb petulantly; "if it weren't for the rest of the family I'd walk out of this kitchen and not set foot in it again."

Constance did not answer. She said to herself that Eunice was not worth considering, but she sighed as the kitchen began to grow too warm for comfort, and began to wonder if Grandpa Newman couldn't find some one to come and help with the work. If Eunice was going to be cross she was very sure that she did not want to be shut up in the hot kitchen with her through many hours of the coming summer.

But Lamb said no more, and both girls busied themselves in preparing dinner; and when Dr. Smith came into the cool dining-room and saw the well-spread table with Constance and Eunice waiting for him he exclaimed admiringly, "Well, girls! I declare, I believe I'll take one of you home with me. We need just such girls over at our house."

"Take Constance!" replied Lamb.

The doctor laughed. "All right, whichever one you say," he responded. "Your father is going to come out of this accident without much trouble," he assured them as he helped himself to the asparagus.

"You girls have been away to school so long I didn't suppose you knew much about cooking," he continued.

"Miss Abitha taught us a good deal, but Eunice is really the cook. I came near boiling the lettuce," said Constance laughingly.

Eunice did not look at her sister, but later on as they were clearing away the dishes she remarked, "Sister, you are worth about two dozen of Miss Eunice Newman."

"Don't wipe that plate again, Lamb; this is the third time," responded Constance, and the girls both laughed as their eyes met, and the sharp words were forgotten.

Before the dishes were finished Mrs. Woodyear appeared. "I came over to stay for to-day," she announced. "Mary don't need me, and I know you do. There will be a good deal of running up and down stairs for you girls to do, and I can keep things running in the kitchen. I wish I could stay longer, but you girls will manage somehow."

At first Constance thought that it would not be necessary for Mrs. Woodyear to stay, but the good woman insisted, and both the girls were glad of her cheerful presence.

Jimmie Woodyear had waited at the station for the

arrival of the Portland train, and it was late in the afternoon when he returned, bringing Dr. Drew and Nurse Loring.

Nurse Loring was a woman of middle age, with an appearance of competence and good-humor which at once won confidence.

There was another anxious hour for them all while Dr. Drew examined the injured man. There were no internal injuries, he declared. The broken rib would soon mend, the bruises soon heal, but the broken leg was a more serious matter. The patient must be kept perfectly quiet, and it would be weeks before he could leave his room. There was no return train to Portland until the next morning, and Constance put the guest-room in order for the doctor, prepared the room which Nurse Loring was to occupy, and when she came down-stairs was very glad that Mrs. Woodyear had supper nearly prepared.

Grandma Newman was not coming down for supper, and Eunice carried up the tray with the dainty meal.

"I must act as if everything was just as usual," the young girl said to herself as she tapped on the door. "It's Eunice," she said, and entered and smiled and nodded cheerfully at the pretty old lady who sat near the eastern window.

"Put the tray right here, Lamb," said grandma, and Eunice set the tray down on the table which grandma valued so highly. It was one grandpa had made for her several years ago, and her grandmother was quite sure that there was not another table as beautiful as that well-finished and highly polished mahogany table.

"The tea is hot as hot," declared Lamb smilingly, "and Dr. Drew is nearly as tall as Mr. Eben Bean, and a good deal wider. Constance says she is half afraid the chairs won't hold him."

"Our chairs will hold anybody who weighs less than a ton," declared Grandma Newman. "What does he say about Henry?"

"He says that he must stay in bed for weeks, and be kept cheerful and entertained."

"Oh!" said grandma. "Well, then, I guess it isn't as bad as it might be. People are not so very badly off if they are to be entertained."

"And," continued Lamb, "if you please, I brought up supper enough for us both and, if you ask me, I should be happy to take supper with you."

"You dear child," said grandma, with a pleased smile; "draw your chair right up."

"Dr. Drew wishes to pay his respects to you after supper," continued Lamb, seating herself at the treasured table, "and I am to tell him when I go down if you will see him."

"Of course I will," grandma answered promptly, "and I am thankful enough that he is to stay the night."

Then Eunice described Nurse Loring, told grandma of Mrs. Woodyear's kindness, and was so cheerful and courageous that grandma's own fears and troubles about her injured son and the comfort of her household quite vanished; and as Eunice said good-night and left her, the old lady smiled and said to herself, "It's just as Jabez says; those two girls are going to smooth out the rough places and take care of everything, and Henry will soon be well again. Eunice and Constance are remarkable girls," and the old lady recalled the days when they first came to the farm to live, and of the happy years which had flown so quickly since then.

"This is the first real responsibility or trouble that has come into their lives," she reflected, "and I wonder if they are going to have the courage to go on as bravely as they have begun."

The girls were very tired when they went up-stairs to their own room. The house was quiet for the night. Dr. Smith had returned home, Dr. Drew was in bed,

and Nurse Loring was in charge of the sick-room. Their mother had retired, and quiet had settled over the house.

"Jimmie is here," Lamb said, as Constance spoke of Mrs. Woodyear's kindness. "He's in the shed chamber."

"What for?" questioned Constance.

"I asked him to stay," replied Lamb; "somehow Jimmie always knows what to do, and I thought we should sleep better if he were here."

"I am too tired not to sleep," said the elder girl, "and you will have to be up early, Lamb, to attend to the milk."

"Yes," agreed Lamb. "We will have to give up our visit to Myrtle Green, won't we?"

"Of course, dear. It may be I shall have to give up my chance at Miss Wilson's school, too. Mother may need me here."

"Yes," agreed Lamb. There was no question in the thoughts of either sister as to what they should do. Whatever disappointment might overtake their own plans was of little moment compared to the fact that they were needed at home. But in the mind of each was an undercurrent of wonder that all their plans of the morning now seemed of so little consequence, and that one jump of the sorrel colt could so change everything. "I suppose it's because we're grown up," whispered Lamb sleepily.

- "What?" questioned Constance.
- "I mean everything seems so different from this time last year," explained Eunice.
- "Of course," agreed Constance, in a matter-of-fact tone.

CHAPTER III

BURNT TOAST

"TIME to get up, Eunice." Constance was nearly dressed, and leaned over her sister, giving her a gentle shake.

"Oh, dear!" said Eunice sleepily; "seems to me it always is time to get up. Can't you manage to get breakfast one morning and let me sleep?"

Constance made no answer, but Eunice did not mind that. She felt tired and cross, and wondered why Constance should want her to get up.

"I hate that sorrel colt," announced Eunice sitting up in bed. "Look at all the trouble he has made for this family! How am I ever going to learn dairy work if I have to stay in that hot kitchen morning, noon, and night washing dishes? How am I ever going——"but the chamber door had closed gently and Eunice found herself without an audience.

"That's just like Constance," she grumbled, slipping out of bed. "I've a great mind not to go near the kitchen; I guess then she would appreciate what I do," and Eunice began, very reluctantly, to take her morning bath. "I'd like to have Rose Mason see all I have to do," she thought; "I guess she wouldn't have so much to say about housekeeping being a fine art. Every morning I shall have to make the fire, put on the kettle, set the table, then clear off the table, wash the dishes! Ugh!" and Eunice splashed the cool water over her face and neck as if to wash away the thought of her future daily employment.

In the meantime Constance had gone down-stairs. Everything seemed hot and untidy. The sun was already shining in at the closed windows, which Constance hastened to open.

"Breakfast will be late this morning," she thought a little wearily. "I don't see why Mrs. Woodyear couldn't have stayed a few days longer. Grandma can't get up mornings, and mother has to rest." Constance began to think housekeeping was more of a problem than school-teaching could possibly be.

"What's the matter, 'Peter'?" asked Grandpa Newman coming into the room. "Jimmie has gone home after his breakfast, and it's time your father's tray was ready. Tired out?" and grandpa patted her shoulder gently.

"No, overslept!" responded Constance, trying not to

let her grandfather see her face, for she knew he would see that she really was tired.

"Here's Eunice! Now I shall get some breakfast in short order," said grandfather laughingly, as he went out on the porch.

"I'm glad somebody thinks that I am of use," grumbled Eunice. "Haven't you made father's toast yet? Well!" and she began to busy herself in preparing the delayed breakfast. "I hear Nurse Loring's starched skirts coming now," she continued reproachfully.

"Wonder where they left Nurse Loring," responded Constance, measuring out the coffee.

Even this feeble attempt to be cheerful proved successful, for a little smile crept over Eunice's face, and when the nurse came in she found the two sisters apparently as happy as usual.

"Father's tray will be ready in a few moments," Constance said, "and your own breakfast as soon after as possible."

"Very well," responded Nurse Loring. "Can't I set the table this morning?"

"Yes, indeed, if you really want to," said Constance promptly.

"If she had said a word about our being late I would

have thrown this toaster at her," Eunice whispered as the nurse left the room.

"Look at this fire, Constance Newman! It's almost out," and Eunice thrust in a handful of kindling, followed by several sticks of wood, while the toast, half dried by the dull fire, now singed quickly into a smudgy blackness.

"What's the good of all Miss Abitha taught us if we can't even get a decent breakfast?" inquired Lamb, as if Constance was wholly responsible.

"Let me see; I recall a quotation that seems to fit in just here: 'And they dreamed of slumbers under murmuring pines, till all of their toil seemed foolishness, and they thought of renown no more,'" and Constance managed to smile.

"Renown!" repeated Eunice. "Well! Yes, nurse, I am making some fresh toast. Sister has the strawberries all ready, and the coffee and eggs won't take long." For Nurse Loring had finished her self-imposed task in the dining-room and now stood quietly waiting for Mr. Newman's tray.

Constance went about her household duties with but little courage that day. The late breakfast gave them no time for rest between the morning duties and the midday meal. Grandma Newman attended to the

dairy work, and for once Eunice was glad not to have that work to do.

"I believe I've lost all my ambition," she confided to Constance, "and all the fault of that sorrel colt. All I can do now is to drudge in the kitchen."

"We don't seem to do even that very well to-day," replied Constance. "I burned up the chops I was cooking for dinner, prepared the custard and then did not cook it, and——"

"And I burned the toast, broke the small blue platter, and cut my thumb," added Lamb.

Now that the work of the day was over, and they were on the cool porch with a little fragrant breeze coming over the hay fields, the unpleasant happenings of the day did not seem so tragic. Constance lay resting in the hammock, and Eunice sat on the top step, looking out toward the orchard.

"That quotation of yours this morning, Sister, made me do a little thinking," went on Eunice. "Neither you nor I will have the opportunity to do much studying this summer, and as for our good times—I'd like to know where they'll come in."

"We'll have to take our good times later on," replied Constance. "I believe I'd enjoy going to sleep as much as anything."

"Let's go," suggested Lamb, and the two girls went up-stairs and were soon sleeping soundly. Their mother came to their room a little later, and if Eunice could have heard her whisper, "My splendid brave girls," as she went softly out she would have felt that all the bother and hard work were amply repaid.

CHAPTER IV

JIMMIE'S CHAMPION

Two weeks before Mr. Henry Newman's accident Miss Abitha Bean had gone with her father, Mr. Eben Bean, to visit relatives in Vermont. Mr. Bean, who had been employed for many years at Pine Tree Farm, had been persuaded to take a summer's rest, and he and his daughter had started out with many anticipations for a happy summer. James Woodyear was now in charge of the farm and Grandfather Newman had every confidence in the young man's ability. He had seen him grow up from a child, and often declared that there was not a smarter or a better boy in the state of Maine than Jimmie Woodyear; and Constance and Eunice were equally sure that there was not a nicer girl than his sister Mary Woodyear.

The first week after their father's accident Mrs. Woodyear stayed at Pine Tree Farm, and then, things having been established in a regular routine, she returned home, and Constance and Eunice faced the real work and responsibilities of the household.

"To-day is the day of the picnic at Lookout," Lamb

reminded her sister, as Constance came into the dairy after some milk for her cooking. "Didn't you promise to go with Carl Smith and his mother?"

"Why, yes, I believe I did," said Constance with a little laugh, "but I had forgotten all about it. Of course they won't expect me to go."

"I don't see why not," responded Eunice, "if you haven't sent them any word to that effect. It is nine o'clock now, and by ten you will see the Smiths' carryall stop at our front gate."

Constance stared at Eunice in dismay. "What shall I do?"

"Get ready and go, of course. I told mother about it yesterday and she said she wanted you to go. We packed your luncheon before I came out to the dairy, and all you have to do is to finish that blanc mange, and then go up-stairs and put on a clean gown, and go smiling out and be whirled away to scenes of pleasure."

"Whirled away!" echoed Constance laughingly.

"That horse Carl drives never goes faster than a dog-trot."

"Never mind; if he isn't as fast as our sorrel colt, he's safer," replied Lamb.

"And who is going to do my share of the work?" questioned Constance.

"It isn't going to be done," Lamb assured her.

"Now run away so as to be ready when the chariot appears," and Constance obeyed. She finished her work in the kitchen and ran up-stairs with a lighter heart than she had known for days. Carl Smith, the doctor's son, was an old friend. He was to follow his father's profession, and was at college. He had shared in many of the Newmans' pleasant outings, and his mother and Mrs. Newman were old friends.

Constance was all ready when the carryall stopped at the door, and Mrs. Smith smiled as the young girl came running down the path.

Carl took the luncheon basket, and helped her in beside his mother, and Lamb waved them good-bye as they started off.

"Wish I could go," she thought to herself, "but it's just as well that I refused when the Smiths asked us. I thought then I'd be too busy, and I thought right," and with a little effort she put the picnic out of her thoughts, and ran up-stairs to put the rooms in order, and ask Nurse Loring if she couldn't just say "good-morning" to her father.

Grandma Newman was sitting with the invalid, who gave Lamb a welcoming smile.

"Sister has gone to a picnic with the Smiths," said

Lamb; "that is, they have started; but that old horse goes so slowly they won't get there until the others are ready to come home."

Mr. Newman laughed a little at Lamb's description. "I shouldn't think Carl would enjoy driving that kind of a horse," he responded.

"He doesn't," agreed Lamb; "he told Jimmie that he didn't enjoy driving any horse, and that as soon as he could afford it he was going to have an automobile."

Mr. Newman smiled again, and Lamb kissed him, and nodded good-bye.

Although the young girl kept a cheerful face, and went briskly about her work, she had some moments when it took all her courage to go on. She could not but remember the happy, care-free summers of the past; the gay house-boat party down the river, when Elinor Perry, Myrtle Green and the Glidden twins, all of whom had been her schoolmates at Miss Wilson's school, had been with them. She recalled the months that she and Constance had kept house with Miss Abitha during their parents' absence. "That was only playing keep house, after all," she thought as she went back to the kitchen. "Miss Abitha was always here to do the hard things."

As she entered the kitchen she found Nurse Loring, in her immaculate white gown and cap, preparing a chicken to roast.

"Don't you want an assistant to-day, Miss Eunice?" she asked smilingly. "Your mother has gone to the village with Mr. Woodyear, and your father is having a visit with his mother, and they can do very well without me," and the good woman nodded encouragingly as she saw Eunice's face brighten.

"Oh! I have been dreading that chicken," Eunice acknowledged with a sigh of relief.

"Well, well!" Nurse Loring's voice was as comforting as her smile. "I don't know as you will believe it, but it is a real treat to me to get into a nice kitchen like this. I should like to get dinner," and she looked at Lamb hopefully.

"You may help if you really want to," Lamb responded.

"You could have gone with your sister just as well as not," continued Nurse Loring. "I wish that I had known about the picnic; your mother and I would have sent you off with the others."

Lamb shook her head. "I refused a long time ago," she explained. "You see, it was all decided that I should take charge of the dairy, and beside that, I was

to read Latin and French. So when I was asked I said that I had not the time," and Lamb felt that she had given just the explanation that a really grown-up young lady would give, and was somewhat surprised to see Nurse Loring shaking her head disapprovingly.

"What does that fat black pony do for its living?" she asked suddenly.

"Jet? Oh, he pulls me over to the village now and then," answered Lamb laughingly.

"Can you harness him?"

"Yes, indeed." Lamb was really surprised now, but Nurse Loring said no more about the pony.

"I'm just set on getting dinner to-day," she began briskly, after a few minutes' silence, taking the basket of peas Lamb was shelling from the girl's unreluctant hands, "and I'd like to do it all. Now, if you were to step up-stairs and put on that pink linen dress I should be sure that you really meant to let me; and I should feel—well, something as if this was my house and you were my company."

Nurse Loring's face wore such a pleading expression that Lamb hesitated.

"Run along, Miss Eunice, do," urged nurse; "some day I'll do something for you."

"I'll have to cover it up with my big apron after

dinner," Lamb reminded her, but she started up-stairs and had just fastened the linen gown when the sound of wheels told her of her mother's return with Jimmie Woodyear. "She called Jimmie 'Mr. Woodyear,'" Lamb remembered, and laughed to herself as she ran down-stairs.

Her mother and Nurse Loring were waiting for her in the hall. "Put your hat on, my dear," said Mrs. Newman smilingly; "Jimmie is waiting to drive you and Mary over to Lookout."

"Oh, mother!" Lamb drew a long breath. It seemed almost too good to really be true. Suddenly she realized how much she wanted to go, how nearly unhappy she had been at not going, and the tears sprang to her eyes. Then, a moment later, she felt her mother's arm around her, and she was being guided across the porch and out to the yard and was helped into the wagon beside Mary; her broad leghorn hat was handed up to her, Jimmie had picked up the reins, and they were off. She looked back to see her mother and Nurse Loring waving to her from the porch.

"Isn't it fine?" asked Mary. "When your mother stopped and said that she wanted me to go to the picnic with you I was delighted. She said Jimmie

could drive us right over. Won't Constance be surprised when she sees us?"

"We may pass them on the road," declared Jimmie laughingly; "this horse doesn't travel at the same rate Carl Smith's does."

"I believe Nurse Loring was going to ask mother to let me drive Jet over to Lookout," said Eunice, and she told her companions of Nurse Loring's wish to get dinner, and of her questions about the pony.

In spite of Jimmie's suggestion that his big bay horse would reach the picnic grounds before Constance did, it was nearly noon when they turned from the shady road into a clearing near the foot of Mount Lookout, and already the picnickers were making ready for luncheon. Baskets were being opened, a rude table was set up in the shade of a big oak tree, and the sound of light laughter and happy voices filled the air. Carl Smith was the first to see them, and ran forward to help the girls from the wagon.

"Good!" he exclaimed. "And you too, Jim? Don't know as I ever saw you at a picnic before." There was a covert sneer in the young man's voice which Mary and Eunice both resented. If James Woodyear felt it he gave no sign.

"Picnics are not much in my line," he responded

pleasantly. "I have to work for my living," and he looked at Carl so directly that the older boy flushed. For Carl had never worked for anything. During his long vacations he loafed away his time, taking his father's money for amusements. As Eunice and Mary looked at the two boys they instinctively knew that Jimmie was far ahead of the boy who had tried to snub him.

"I wish you would stay, Jimmie," said Lamb, and Mary looked at her gratefully. To Mary Woodyear no one could be better than her brother Jimmie. She remembered how, when he was a boy of thirteen, he had cleared the land on which their comfortable house now stood; that he had worked early and late to give his mother a home, without thought of himself, but always eager to do his best.

She stood close beside the wagon as Eunice walked off with Carl Smith to find Constance.

"What is it, Mary?" and her brother's blue eyes smiled down on her as he gathered up the reins.

"I hate that Carl Smith," the girl declared, her face flushed and unhappy.

"Nonsense!" and Jimmie's laugh rang out so clearly that Carl Smith heard it, and wondered uneasily what that "farmer" found to laugh about. "I have more fun in a day than he ever had. Why, he doesn't earn his own living," and Jimmie's voice expressed what he thought of a youth past twenty-one of whom that could be said. "Run along and have a good time, Mazie," he added gently, and raising his cap, turned the big bay horse and was off on his homeward way.

"This is our first 'grown-up' picnic, isn't it, Sister?" said Lamb, as she and Constance followed Carl and Mary up the narrow path to the summit of Lookout, from whose height a fine view of the surrounding country could be seen.

"And it's fun, isn't it?" responded Constance happily. "The new minister called me 'Miss' Newman, and asked me if I believed in domestic science as a helpful study in girls' schools; and I almost giggled. But I remembered just in time that I was going to be a teacher, and so I answered in the most intelligent manner."

The sisters laughed, and then Lamb told Constance of Carl Smith's sneer at Jimmie Woodyear. "I wish you hadn't come to the picnic with him," concluded Lamb earnestly.

- "Well ——" Constance hesitated.
- "Well, what?" questioned Lamb.
- "You know there is a difference between Jimmie

and Carl," began Constance, a little reluctantly. "You see, really, Jimmie is only grandpa's hired man, and Carl is a college student and will be a physician. Of course——" But Lamb interrupted her fiercely:

"Constance Newman! You ought to be ashamed if you mean to say that our Jimmie isn't as good, yes, and better, too, than that Carl Smith. Of course Jimmie is grandpa's hired man. So is Mr. Eben Bean, and I guess you wouldn't tell Miss Abitha that her father isn't as good as anybody. Carl Smith is silly. That's what he is. I'm ashamed of you, too, Constance Newman."

"You are a silly little girl," said Constance in what she was sure was a very grown-up manner.

It was the first time in all their lives that the sisters had differed so seriously. Lamb choked back her tears, resolved that Constance should not see her cry; and Constance suddenly realized that she was not having a good time at all; and that the old picnics with Miss Abitha were much more enjoyable. She looked at Carl Smith, in his white linen suit and jaunty straw hat with its crimson ribbon band. "I know Mrs. Smith presses his clothes for him," she thought to herself, and she remembered Dr. Smith's worn clothes, his shabby overcoat, and knew that Carl

wasn't worth the hard work and daily sacrifices his parents made for him.

"Of course he isn't half the man Jimmie is," she exclaimed aloud, and in a moment Lamb's arms were about her sister's neck, and the two were laughing and crying together. A turn in the path had left them alone for a moment.

"I was perfectly horrid, Sister," declared Lamb.

"I was silly," acknowledged Constance. "As if all the Carl Smiths in the world were worth our quarreling over."

"Perhaps Carl doesn't know any better," suggested Lamb generously. "You see, he is the doctor's only son, and he is good-looking, and I suppose he thinks it's all right to let his father and mother scrub along, while he takes all they give him."

"Perhaps he doesn't know any better," said Constance thoughtfully, wondering to herself if there was not some way in which Carl could be made to realize what was really of importance, that it was time for him to do a man's work in the world.

CHAPTER V

EUNICE MAKES A MISTAKE

"You may ride home with us, Eunice," said Carl as the late afternoon began to warn the picnickers that it was time to think of returning. Already several of the boys were leading the horses from the shade of the big trees, pulling out their wagons, and making preparations for the homeward trip. Eunice had just been wondering why Carl did not bestir himself and harness his horse.

"Thank you," she replied pleasantly, "but Jimmie is coming for Mary and me."

Carl laughed, a little unpleasant laugh, which made Eunice look at him curiously. And as she looked she wished Carl could see himself as she saw him. His delicate skin, unused to sun and wind, had burned a bright pink, his eyes seemed to have vanished behind the glimmer of his spectacles, and his light hair looked even more faded and thin than Lamb remembered it.

"Oh, Jim is coming back, is he?" responded Carl, stooping over to tie the silk shoe-lace in his well-

polished tan shoe. "Well, that's good. He can harness my horse for me."

Eunice checked the angry response which rose to her lips, and after a moment asked:

"Don't you know how to harness?"

"Yes," drawled Carl, "but it isn't really the kind of work I like, and I fancy it wouldn't improve the looks of a white suit," and he looked down at his white duck clothes, which, in spite of a day's picnic, were still immaculate, as Carl had taken no part with the other boys in the work or fun of the day.

"I suppose it is hard for your mother to do them up," said Lamb. "There's Jimmie now. I'll ask him to harness for you, and tell him you are afraid of getting your white suit soiled," and now Eunice laughed, as she nodded at the tall boy beside her and ran down the slope to join the little group gathered about Jimmie. Mrs. Smith, Mary and Constance were of the party, and Lamb called out, "Jimmie, will you harness Carl Smith's horse? He isn't afraid of the horse, but he is afraid he'll injure his white suit."

A laugh went up from another group of young people close at hand who had heard Lamb's remark, and several of the boys called out: "We'll all help harness Dobbin; come on, Jimmie; it won't do to let Miss Smith harness a horse," and there was a rush toward the Smith carryall, and the steady old horse was led out by two of the boys, who pretended they were leading a spirited and valuable animal of whom they were somewhat afraid. In a few minutes the horse was harnessed, and one of the village boys ran toward Carl, bowed low before him and announced, "My lord, your carriage is ready."

Carl's pink face deepened to crimson. His very glasses seemed to glare with anger. But he made no answer to the summons. He had not heard what Lamb said, but had seen the boys rush for his horse, and fancied that it was Jimmie Woodyear who, angry at Carl's intended slight, had set the others on to make game of him. He said nothing, but he resolved that he would be "even" with Jimmie.

While the harnessing was going on Carl's mother turned to Constance almost pleadingly. "What made your sister do such a cruel thing?" she asked. "I am sure my boy doesn't deserve to be made fun of."

Constance hardly knew what to reply. She had not heard the conversation between Carl and her sister, and she wondered why Lamb should have held Carl up to ridicule; and, for the second time that day, she was conscious of resentment against Eunice. "She might have remembered Mrs. Smith, and not hurt her feelings," she thought, and looked at Eunice so accusingly that Lamb's laugh suddenly ended, and her eyes turned toward Carl's mother, who stood close beside Constance, her face flushed and unhappy.

"Oh!" Lamb groaned in spirit. "What have I done? Why couldn't I have kept still? Poor Mrs. Smith!"

Carl helped his mother into the back seat of the carryall, and was about to assist Constance to the seat beside her, but the girl smiled at the elder woman and said: "Do you mind if I sit with Carl on the ride home?"

"No, indeed!" responded Mrs. Smith gratefully, and Carl felt a quick return of self-respect as he sprang into the carriage and picked up the reins and turned to answer a laughing remark from Constance.

"Wave your hat to them," Constance said softly, as they started, and Carl turned and waved his hat, as if all was well. Jimmie Woodyear was the only one who responded.

A chorus of good-byes followed them, and the anxious look faded from Mrs. Smith's face. After all, she thought, it was only young people's nonsense. She felt grateful to Constance for her ready championship

toward Carl; and Carl himself resolved that Constance should never be sorry that she had "stood by him," as he expressed it to himself, in his moment of humiliation. He was more silent than usual on the way home, and Constance thought she had never liked him so well. He did not make fun of the old horse, or refer to the "slowness" of country life. He said he wished Lamb had decided to drive home with them, and at this remark, which both Constance and Mrs. Smith felt to be a proof of Carl's generous spirit, the girl wondered again what had possessed Lamb to be so needlessly cruel.

Eunice was not enjoying her ride home as much, even, as Carl and Constance. Although Mary and Jimmie were as friendly and pleasant as ever, they had nothing to say about Carl or the closing scene of the picnic. Lamb wished that she could explain how it happened. She wished that Mary and Jimmie knew that she had tried to punish Carl because he wanted to slight Jimmie, but of course she could not do that. So it was a very silent and unhappy girl who came back to Pine Tree Farm a good half hour before Constance arrived.

"They'll always call Carl 'Miss Smith' now," Mary said to her brother as they drove toward their own home.

"Poor Carl!" said Jimmie laughingly. "I'm afraid they will. It's rather too bad, for he'll be quite a fellow when he gets some of the nonsense knocked out of him."

"He'll never forgive Lamb," said Mary.

"Yes, he will," declared Jimmie; "he wouldn't be silly enough to remember such nonsense."

Nurse Loring met Lamb at the door with a radiant smile. "I've had a beautiful time all day keeping house," she exclaimed. "And I really think that your father was glad to be rid of me. Did you have a good time?"

"Yes," said Lamb, but in so doleful a tone that Nurse Loring looked at her in surprise.

"Your mother is right up-stairs in her own room. You'd better run right up and tell her about it," said Nurse Loring with a wise little nod.

But Lamb shook her head. "I'll wait," she replied, and went slowly toward her own room.

She slipped off the linen dress and hung it in the closet and put on the neat checked gingham. As she went by the door of her mother's room, which stood ajar, she heard voices. "I am surprised at Eunice," her mother was saying, and almost unconsciously Eunice stood still. She realized that Constance was

telling their mother of the unfortunate affair at the picnic. "Mrs. Smith felt dreadfully," said Constance, "and I couldn't say a word——"

Both Constance and Mrs. Newman gave a startled exclamation as the door was pushed open and Eunice rushed into the room.

"I think you are too mean for anything, Constance Newman!" she exclaimed. "You are the one who ought to be ashamed. You didn't stand up for Jimmie Woodyear a bit. I did, and I'm glad of it."

"Eunice!" Mrs. Newman's voice was unusually sharp. "Your sister did exactly right. I did not suppose that you had so little self-control as ——" But Eunice did not wait for the rest of the sentence; she had rushed from the room.

"Let me go after her," suggested Constance. "I know she is tired and disappointed, and I can tell her that we don't blame her for being loyal to Jimmie, but that we are sorry on Mrs. Smith's account."

"No," responded Mrs. Newman; "it is better to let her think it over herself."

Lamb turned toward the dairy. There was work to do there and she was so unhappy that she wanted to be alone, and did not think any one would disturb her there. As she crossed the yard Grandpa Newman called to her, but she did not answer him. "I suppose he wants to find fault, too," she thought.

Grandma Newman was in the dairy, and as Lamb entered she held up a tin milk pan. "Look at this pan, Eunice!" she said reprovingly. "I declare, I thought I had taught you to be careful about rust. I don't see what you could be thinking of ——! Bless my soul!" concluded the little old lady in a tune of dismay, for Eunice could no longer contain herself and with a sudden rush toward the door she disappeared, leaving her astonished grandmother to gaze after her.

"Everybody is horrid," the girl said to herself, as she fled from the dairy. It had been the most unhappy day of her life. She was sure that she could never face Mrs. Smith again, and she dreaded to see Constance and her mother. She felt tired and discouraged. All the unpleasant happenings of the past weeks crowded upon her; her father's accident, the giving up of her lessons and leisure time to the work of the house, the disagreement with Constance, and last of all her own betrayal of Carl for the amusement and scorn of his companions.

Her grandmother did not follow or call after her. "I guess the dear child is tired," she said to herself, thinking that Eunice had returned to the house. She

set the dairy in order, and then walked slowly across the green yard, wondering if she had not been too harsh in finding any fault with her dear grandchild.

Constance and her mother were preparing supper; Nurse Loring had returned to her patient; Grandfather Newman was at the barns assisting Jimmie, but Lamb was not to be seen.

"Gone off to have her cry by herself," thought Grandmother Newman, and decided that she would not ask any questions. "The dear child will tell me herself," she concluded, but she looked at Constance more closely than usual.

Constance was busy, and seemed cheerful, but grand-ma's keen eyes noticed an anxious look on the girl's face. "Dear me," sighed the old lady, "a few years ago and both these girls were as happy as the birds and butterflies, and now they begin to look serious and grown up. Dear me," and she sat down by the pleasant western window in the sitting-room and her thoughts ran back over the happy years they had all spent together at Pine Tree Farm.

"Where is Eunice?" asked young Mrs. Newman, as the other members of the family gathered about the table. "Run up-stairs, Constance dear, and tell her that supper is waiting." A little reluctantly Constance started up the stairs. She knew that she could not but let Lamb see that she blamed her for the unfortunate affair at the picnic grounds, and it was hard to blame her sister for anything.

"I must remember that she is only sixteen," thought Constance, and her voice was very gentle as she opened the door of their pretty chamber and called, "Eunice, Eunice!"

There was no response, and a glance showed that the room was vacant. Constance ran out to the dairy, thinking some work there had detained her sister, but Eunice was not there.

Constance walked slowly into the dining-room. "I can't find her. Do you suppose she is up-stairs with father?"

"Run and see, dear," suggested her mother, but a look into her father's room proved that Lamb was not there.

"Well, well!" said Grandpa Newman, as Constance came back alone. "We may as well eat supper. The child isn't lost. Six years ago we could be pretty sure that Eunice was taking a nap somewhere if she didn't appear at meals. But if a girl of sixteen doesn't come to supper it's because she doesn't want any supper.

Isn't that so, 'Peter'?" and he turned to Constance with a questioning smile.

Grandpa Newman's opinion seemed to satisfy Eunice's mother, but Constance, remembering what had happened, and grandma, recalling the burst of tears and sudden flight from the dairy, were both a little anxious; although Constance returned her grandfather's smile and said bravely, "Of course Lamb is too big to get lost. She may appear any minute."

Grandma Newman said nothing. But her supper did not taste so good as usual, and she insisted on returning to the dairy to see that Jimmie and his helper brought in the milk, and that it was properly taken care of.

"The dear child has probably come back to the dairy by this time," thought Grandmother Newman hopefully. But Eunice was not in the dairy.

CHAPTER VI

EUNICE RUNS AWAY

WHEN Eunice rushed out of the dairy, leaving her astonished grandmother to gaze after her in wonder and dismay, it was with no thought of where she should go. She ran toward the orchard and, under the tree where she and Constance always put supplies for winterloving birds, she sank down, leaned her head against the rough bark and for a few moments sobbed bitterly. She felt sure that every one who knew her would despise her.

"Mrs. Smith will tell mother, and they will all be ashamed of me," she thought; "even Sister will despise me, and Mary and Jimmie will never know that I did it because Carl was so mean about Jimmie." This last thought seemed to make it all the harder to bear. To be a champion, and inflict humiliation upon a person who deserved to be humiliated, and then to be punished yourself; to have your acts unrecognized and misunderstood, this was indeed hard to bear.

After her tears ceased Eunice sat thinking over the unhappy day. It did not seem to her that it could ever

be set straight again. "It wouldn't do any good now if I were to tell everybody that he was trying to make our Jimmie a nobody. People wouldn't understand," she said to herself.

She knew it was past supper time, but she did not care. She felt sure that she should never be hungry again. The long June twilight deepened into darkness and still the young girl sat leaning against the friendly trunk of the old apple tree. She saw the lights begin to glow from the windows of her home, and her mother's white dress glimmered against the light as she came out and stood on the back porch for a few minutes.

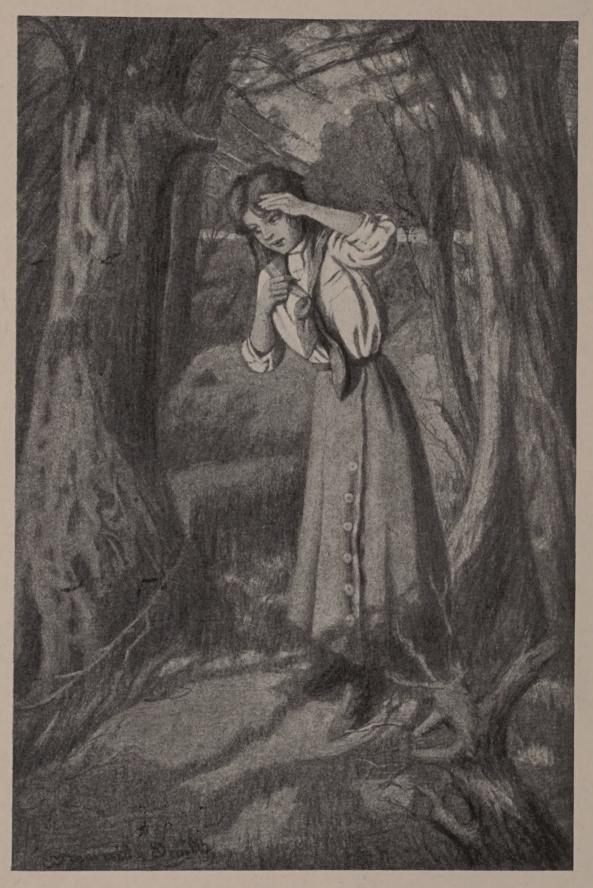
"I wonder if she is thinking of me," thought the unhappy girl. As it grew darker she stood up and drew a long breath. "It's the best way," she said aloud; "they may miss me at first, but they will have Sister; and I know I ought not to make any more trouble for anybody. I will go to Boston and get a chance to work among poor children." And she started toward the gray highway which showed like a dull ribbon between the darker fields.

Lamb's plans began to take more definite shape. She would walk to Portland, she decided, and get something to do there to earn money to pay her fare to Boston. Once there she knew exactly what to do. She would ask the address of some clergyman and go right to his house, and tell him that she had come to work for poor children. "Probably he will wish me to go to some Children's Home and teach," Lamb thought, "and then after I have proved what I can do I shall write home, and then they will be proud of me and forgive me."

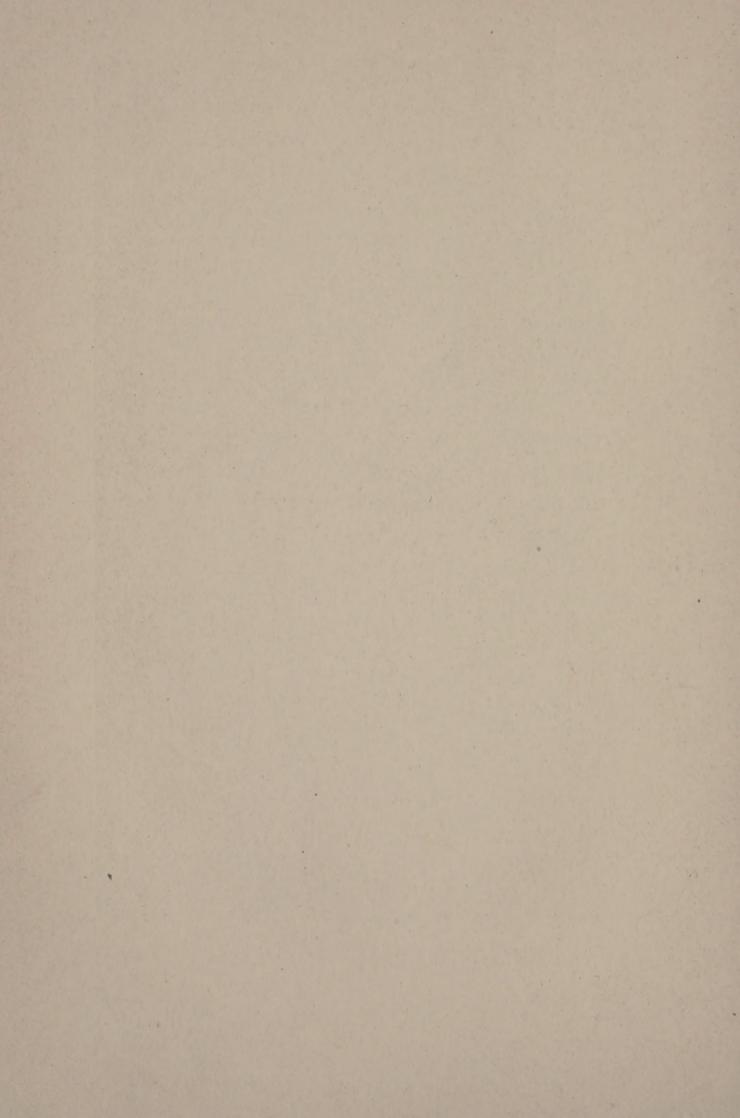
Lamb sobbed a little at the thought of her own exile, but she walked sturdily on. She knew that it was a hundred miles to Portland, and she wanted to get well on her way before the night grew late. "Then I shall find a nice place to sleep under some tree," she thought, "and in the morning I can get something to eat at some house on the way."

For a long time the road was familiar, even in the dark, but after an hour or two she passed the unfamiliar buildings of a large farm, then one or two cottages, and then entered a long stretch of road thickly wooded on either side.

"There will be a fine place to sleep in these woods," thought Eunice, as she left the highway and carefully made her way among the tall pines. The moon had risen, and its silvery light shone down through the branches of the trees and she easily made her way to



"I SHALL FIND A NICE PLACE TO SLEEP"



a smooth bank of pine-needles. It was an ideal place to rest. The ground was thickly covered with pine-needles. Two big trees growing close together made a shelter from the side toward the road, and further toward the woods grew a clump of wild laurel, its glossy leaves shining in the moonlight.

It was past midnight, although Eunice did not know it; and she was too tired to think of anything but rest. She sank down on the soft earth and was almost instantly asleep. The midsummer night was warm and fragrant. Now and then a soft little breeze would move the upper branches of the tall pines, but Lamb did not heed their murmur. One or two squirrels scolded noisily in the tree tops, but neither this nor the occasional call of some night-bird awakened her. She slept soundly, and did not awaken until the sun, hours high, found its way among the thick branches over her and peered down into her face.

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Eunice, sitting up and wondering for a moment if she were dreaming. Then the happenings of the previous day crowded upon her, and she realized that she was really alone, on her way to a strange city, that she could not see those she so dearly loved until by hard work and sacrifice she had proved herself of use in the world. She was tempted to cry again, but she choked back the tears, and rose to her feet. "I must go on," she thought, "and I must find something to eat. I am so hungry." She smoothed down the crumpled gingham dress, shook out her thick hair and rebraided it, and wished that she knew in which direction to look for a brook. "If I could only bathe my face and hands and feet I am sure I should feel better," she thought. She was near enough to the road to hear the passing of teams, but was well screened from sight by the trees. On the night before, when she heard a team on the road, she had hurried into the shadow and stood motionless until it had passed.

Now as she stood listening she became conscious of a little murmuring sound near at hand.

"That sounds like a brook," she thought, and hurried in the direction of the sound. It led her down a little slope at the bottom of which flowed a clear little stream. Eunice knelt before it and drank gratefully. Then she bathed her hands and face in the cool water, slipped off her shoes and stockings and dipped her tired feet into the little pool. As she looked up the stream she saw that it was bordered with bunches of wild cress.

"Goody!" she whispered to herself. "Water-cress

isn't just what I like for breakfast, but it will taste good this morning."

Leaving her shoes and stockings on the bank, she waded up the stream and, gathering a quantity of the cress, sat down on a big rock near at hand and ate it hungrily. Then, refreshed and rested, she put on her shoes and stockings and began to think of going on her way. Already it was near noon, and as she regained the road Lamb heard the toot of an automobile horn and stepped behind a convenient tree.

In a moment a big red car turned the corner. There were five people in it, and as it came smoothly along Lamb noticed that the three on the back seat were girls. A man of middle age was driving, and beside him sat a pleasant-faced woman. As they passed the tree behind which Lamb was hiding she nearly called out, for she recognized the occupants of the car. The young girls were the Glidden twins and Myrtle Green, and the man and woman on the front seat were Mr. and Mrs. Green.

"They are on their way to Pine Tree Farm; I know they are," thought Lamb. "If I should call to them they would take me back," and for a moment she almost decided to give up her plan of teaching poor children and go home with these friends. But just

then the big car came to a stop on the further side of the road, and Lamb heard Adrienne Glidden exclaim, "This is just the place for luncheon, it's so cool and shady."

"It is past twelve," said Mr. Green, "and as we made an early start I think we'll all have good appetites," and he nodded smilingly at Mrs. Green.

The box of luncheon was taken out, and Lamb watched them hungrily. "If I could have only one sandwich," she thought, knowing all the time with what joy they would all welcome her and share with her if she should come running out from her hiding place. "But they don't know how horrid I am, how everybody despises me," she thought.

As they finished eating Eunice heard Myrtle say, "We shan't want the rest of these sandwiches, shall we, for we shall be at Pine Tree Farm in an hour or so."

"Do them all up in a paper and write 'For the next hungry person,'" suggested Adrienne Glidden.

"And tie the package to the branch of this tree, and when we come back to-morrow we can see if it has been taken," said her sister.

So the package of food was tied up neatly, and on the paper was written, "For the next hungry person." Then the automobile party clambered back into their seats, Mr. Green took his place at the wheel, and the machine was out of sight in a minute.

Eunice sped across the road and grabbed the swaying package, and then ran back to the brook. "They didn't think whom they were leaving it for," she said to herself; "for their own friend Eunice, alone and almost starved in the woods," and again she choked back a sob over her own misfortunes.

She tore off the wrapper, and exclaimed joyfully at the contents.

"Six sandwiches," she whispered, biting into one of them as she spoke, and saying "chicken," with delight. "And little pound cakes," she continued, holding up two round cakes frosted with white, "and gingerbread," she went on, "and here is an apple turnover!"

Eunice had eaten many good things, but nothing had ever tasted so good as did that noonday feast in the woods.

"I must not eat it all," she thought regretfully, "for I may not get anything more to-day. I wonder how long it will take me to get to Portland," and doing up the remaining sandwiches and cake, she made her way back to the road.

"When I get to Portland I'll go to some nice-look-

ing house, and ask if they would like to hire a girl to help with the housework," she thought. "I know I can do that, and probably they will ask me what wages I want, and I will say, 'Three dollars a week.' It won't take me many weeks to earn enough for my fare to Boston, and to buy me a hat, and a brush and comb and some other things."

In spite of her long rest Eunice was tired and walked more slowly than on the night before. She soon left the shaded wood road behind her, and now the sun shone down on the hot dusty road and her head began to ache. She began to wish she had remained in the pine woods until nightfall, but remembered that the greater part of her journey still lay before her and kept on.

There was no place for her to hide now when teams came in sight. The road lay between green fields, and there were no sheltering fences or underbrush to crouch behind. One or two wagons passed, but their drivers did not seem to notice the bareheaded girl, and Lamb began to feel safe from discovery.

"I am so far away from home now," she thought, "that no one would know me anyway." So on she went through the heat and dust, tired, footsore and weary. A long sandy hill lay before her. "It won't

be much harder," she thought. She heard behind her the sound of an approaching automobile, but it did not alarm her, and there was no place for her to hide. She was too tired even to turn aside, and her feet were so sore, and how strangely her head throbbed. Then, suddenly, Eunice pitched forward and lay flat in the sandy road.

CHAPTER VII

PLANS FOR A CELEBRATION

"IT is Eunice!" exclaimed Mr. Green as the big car came to a sudden stop just before reaching the girl's prostrate figure.

"Thank heaven!" said Grandpa Newman, and the two men lifted Eunice from the road to the back seat of the car, stretched her upon the comfortable cushions, and in a moment her eyes opened.

"I ate the sandwiches," she announced, and then seeing her grandfather's kind face bending over her she gave a little sigh of relief, and again Mr. Newman ejaculated, "Thank heaven!"

In another minute Mr. Green had turned the car and they were speeding back toward Pine Tree Farm. Eunice sat resting against her grandfather's shoulder, her hand clasped closely in his, and gradually all the unhappy story was poured out to his sympathizing ears: Carl's sneers at Jimmie, Lamb's loyal championship and her desire to make Carl understand that his own idleness and selfishness made him Jimmie's inferior, and all that had followed as a result.

"I was so ashamed, grandpa, when I saw Mrs. Smith's face," concluded the girl, "and I knew Sister blamed me, and of course they all thought I was hateful. I didn't suppose I could ever tell anybody about it, but it has been easy to tell you."

"Yes, dear child," replied grandpa understandingly. He did not tell Lamb just then of all the distress and unhappiness she had caused those who loved her by allowing herself to be carried away by her own feelings. He knew that she was physically worn out, and was sure that Eunice's mother was the best one to tell her.

As they neared home Eunice began to dread the thought of seeing Myrtle and the twins. Grandpa Newman seemed to feel this, for he said: "Mrs. Green and the girls are not at the farm. They returned home by train an hour or so ago, and Mr. Green goes back this afternoon."

Eunice's mother and Constance saw the automobile as it came whirling down the smooth road, and when it drew up before the big white house and grandpa lifted out the runaway girl their arms were about her and she was in the house and in her own room almost before she realized it. Then, as Constance took off her sister's shoes, and brought warm water and soft towels,

and her mother unbraided the dusty hair, the sad little story, with Lamb's plan for work and sacrifice to redeem herself, was told again. And again she was comforted and consoled, and made to realize that her own people understood her and loved her.

"I have been such an idiot," she whispered, sipping the appetizing broth which Nurse Loring brought up. Mrs. Newman thought it best that Eunice should go to bed, and Constance slipped out of the room and left Eunice alone with her mother.

"Does everybody know that I ran away?" questioned the girl, with a half-appealing look which made Mrs. Newman rejoice that "everybody" did not know.

"No, my dear girl. You see, we didn't really know it ourselves. Until late in the evening we thought you must be with Mary Woodyear; and then, remembering your trick of taking naps in all sorts of places when you were a little girl, we thought you were asleep somewhere and would appear bright and smiling this morning. But by nine o'clock we were thoroughly alarmed, and we have all been searching everywhere. When Mr. Green appeared here just after lunch time we told him and he and grandpa decided to ride down the Portland Road. You must have walked nearly twenty miles."

- "Do the girls know?" asked Lamb.
- "Yes, my dear. But they will never speak of it to you or to any one else," Mrs. Newman assured her.
- "I am so ashamed!" said Eunice. "You wouldn't think your daughter could have done such a thing, would you, mother?"

"We won't talk any more now," said Mrs. Newman; "take a nap, and come down to supper if you feel like it," and kissing the flushed face Mrs. Newman left the room.

Mary and Jimmie were told enough of Lamb's story for them to understand why she had spoken of Carl as she did, and although Jimmie said but little he could not help but feel that Lamb's loyalty to an old friend was the finest trait possible. Mary was openly delighted, and the entire Woodyear family thereafter regarded Eunice Newman with a new affection.

As the days went on Eunice tried to forget her own mistaken view of the affair.

"Wasn't I a silly," she confided to Constance, "to start off like that? It frightens me now to think of it. I must have known all the time that I couldn't carry out my plan."

"Indeed you could not," Constance assured her, "and I am sure you would never have thought of starting off if you had remembered what it would make us all suffer here at home. Just imagine if I disappeared how you would feel! And if day after day passed and no one knew where I was!"

"Oh, Sister! It would be dreadful!"

Constance nodded. "Of course it would. If you had not come home all our happiness would have been destroyed forever." The elder girl's face was very serious.

"You see, Eunice," she went on, "we are not children now, and all our mother and father think about is that we should be happy, and of some use in the world. And you know how grandpa and grandma love us. Well, if we do foolish things, you see they are the ones who suffer. We must think before we do anything."

"Yes," responded Eunice soberly. "It seems to me I shall never do such a foolish thing again. But it all started with Carl Smith's——"

But Constance interrupted her. "Never mind, dear. Carl Smith must work out his own problems, just as we must do ours. It isn't our place to point out his mistakes. And he has good qualities!"

"What are they?" demanded Lamb. She felt almost a sense of injury that Constance should see anything to commend in Carl.

Constance laughed at her sister's earnestness. "I'm

sure Carl has a good disposition," she replied; "he is always ready to do anything his mother or father asks him to do. The trouble with Carl is that he doesn't realize that he is really grown up."

"I believe I'd just as soon tell him that," responded Eunice laughingly; "but perhaps he may find it out without my assistance."

"Perhaps he will," responded Constance.

As Mr. Newman began to hobble about on crutches, Nurse Loring's time was not so fully occupied. She offered to assist in the work of the house, much to Mrs. Newman's satisfaction, for she felt that both Eunice and Constance had had a difficult summer. Now they would have time for walks and drives, as well as leisure to take up the studies that they had given no thought to during the first weeks after their father's accident.

"My night in the pine woods was lovely," Eunice told Constance, in talking over her adventure; "and how sweet and good that water-cress did taste."

"Perhaps grandpa will take us all over there some day," suggested Constance, "and I wish Nurse Loring could go. She hasn't been away, except to the village, since she came here. I know that she would enjoy a day in the woods."

"Perhaps Mrs. Woodyear would come up and stay with father for a day," said Eunice.

"We'll talk it over with mother," responded Constance.

It was that very afternoon that Grandma Newman discovered that Nurse Loring's birthday was only a week off. "And her nearest kin are in Scotland," said grandma, quite as if the Newman family were in some way responsible for her lonely condition.

"There's a full moon on that night," announced Lamb, "and those pine woods are wonderful in the moonlight. Couldn't we go over and have supper there and drive home in the evening?"

"It's quite a drive; eight miles, surely," said Mrs. Newman, thinking of her little girl trudging all that distance in the dark. "And I had thought of having a little celebration here at home. You see, Dr. Smith thinks that your father can come down-stairs in a week, if he will be very careful, and we could ask some friends to tea, and plan a little surprise for Nurse Loring. I told Dr. Smith that we should expect him and Mrs. Smith and Carl to be here."

"Carl!" exclaimed Lamb, for in some way Carl seemed the cause of all her troubles.

"Yes," responded her mother quietly, and Lamb

said no more. But she began to dread Nurse Loring's birthday celebration.

"Shall you ask Mary and Jimmie Woodyear to tea?" she questioned her mother a few days later, when they were making their plans for the birthday.

"Certainly," said Mrs. Newman. "I think Carl and Jimmie will like each other when they become better acquainted."

Eunice looked at her mother in surprise, then she gave a happy little laugh. "Well," she said, "I know it will be all right if you plan it, but to ask Carl and Jimmie to become better acquainted seems like inviting trouble."

"Wait and see," responded Mrs. Newman smilingly.

"I wish Miss Abitha was here to help us plan something new for supper," said Constance.

"I am going to leave you and Eunice to do that," said their mother. "I have an idea that my grown-up little girls have some ideas of their own which may prove just as good as dear Miss Abitha's."

"Oh, mother, you think too much of us," said Constance laughingly, shaking a warning finger at her pretty mother; "but if Eunice and I do plan the supper you will all be surprised. I have an inspiration."

"Then I'll leave you to talk it over with Lamb," said Mrs. Newman.

"What is it, Sister?" questioned Eunice eagerly, as soon as the door closed behind their mother.

"We'll have a circus supper!" announced Constance.

"It came to me just like that," and she snapped her
fingers gaily. "I can see just how the table will look,
and I know just what we will have to eat."

"Tell me!" urged Eunice, sitting down close beside Constance, and regarding her admiringly.

"First of all," began Constance, "is what we will have to eat. We will have chicken croquettes made to look like wild beasts, legs of bits of wood, heads cut out of pickles, and tails of shoe-string potatoes."

"Lovely!" interrupted Eunice.

"Of course we'll serve green peas with the croquettes," went on Constance, "and we'll make tiny biscuit, and put clown caps made of white paper on each one. Then we'll have rounds of buttered toast with apple jelly in the center, and label that plate 'Circus rings.' And we'll put little bags of salted peanuts at each plate labeled 'To feed the elephants.' Of course we will have cold ham and cake and coffee," concluded Constance.

"You are a wonder!" announced Eunice. "I do

think that is just as good as any of Miss Abitha's ideas."

"I have thought of a splendid way to fix the table," went on Constance. "We can make a little fence of strips of cardboard in the center of the table, like a circus ring, you know. And then we can cut out some funny little paper dolls to look like acrobats and elephants and giraffes marching in a procession. Then we can hang ribbons from the hanging lamp over the dining table for a trapeze, and cover two tiny hoops with paper, and have an acrobat swinging from it!"

"Oh, Constance!" exclaimed Eunice. "Miss Abitha herself never thought of such a perfectly wonderful surprise."

"It will all be easy to do," said Constance. "We can do every single thing ourselves, and I am sure father will like it."

"Of course he will. But there must be presents for Nurse Loring."

"Yes," nodded Constance. "I have thought of that, too. You know mother has yards of linen lawn, and I think she will give us enough for two nurse's aprons, and we will have time to make them, I'm sure. You know we always go up to the 'lookout' to study, so Nurse Loring will not see us at work."

The "lookout" was a big attic room, which the girls had fitted up and made comfortable some years ago, and which they used as a study.

"We will have to begin right away," declared Eunice, "because really there is a good deal to do."

"We will begin now," said Constance; "let's go ask mother for the lawn, and I can easily get one of Nurse Loring's aprons as a pattern. Then I want to tell grandma about the circus supper."

"It begins to seem as if our good times were beginning again," said Eunice, as they went in search of their mother, "but I can't help wondering about mother's plan to have Jimmie Woodyear and Carl Smith become friends."

CHAPTER VIII

THE CIRCUS SUPPER

MRS. SMITH had not spoken to Carl or to his father about the unfortunate affair at the picnic, but it had been often in her thoughts. That Carl did not mention Eunice Newman's making him an object of laughter to his companions seemed to his mother an evidence of her son's generous instincts, and she said to herself that it was just the way that she would have chosen for her son to act. But she could not understand why Eunice had been so cruel. Several times she thought of relating the incident to Mrs. Newman, and then said to herself that perhaps it was only a girl's nonsense, and not worth troubling her mother about.

Carl, who had not heard Eunice summon his friends to his aid, believed Jimmie Woodyear to have been the instigator of what, in his own thoughts, he termed the "attack" upon him; and his resolve to be even with "the farmer," as he contemptuously termed Jimmie, had not lessened. As he sat reading on the cool porch or loitered about the village streets, his brain was revolving schemes of injury against Jimmie.

Dr. Smith had begun to feel dissatisfied with Carl's progress at college. Past twenty, he was only a sophomore, and his father knew that beyond the college stretched the long course in the medical school and hospitals before Carl could begin practice.

"He will be nearly thirty before he is ready to begin," the tired doctor thought, "and he does not try even to do his best, or to earn a penny."

Dr. Smith had earned his own college training. And when he thought of the two Woodyear boys, Jimmie already a man in his ability to earn a living and holding the position of superintendent of the best farm in the county, Dannie at sixteen a sophomore in the state university and working near the college through his vacation, the doctor wondered why his own son was so idle, and so lacking in manly ambition to earn a place for himself.

How anxiously the Newman family waited for the day when young Mr. Newman could come down-stairs. He had promised Nurse Loring that he would not go out-of-doors at all. "Only over the smooth floors," she warned him, as he made his careful way down the broad stairs.

In the hall were his father and mother, watching him as anxiously as though he were a child again taking his first perilous steps. Mrs. Newman came down with him, and Constance and Eunice, eager and smiling and full of their plans for the "Circus supper," stood at the foot of the stairs.

Their father was in excellent spirits, and declared that the first drive he took would be behind the sorrel colt—an assertion which brought a chorus of protests from every one except Grandpa Newman, who smiled confidently.

"You will be quite safe behind the sorrel, Henry," he said. "Jimmie began driving him the very day of your accident, and I don't believe there is a better trained colt in the state. He stops at a word, thinks an automobile means people with lumps of sugar especially for him, and is the pride of the farm."

"Jimmie is a wonder," declared Mr. Newman, "but I am almost disappointed. I had looked forward to training the sorrel myself."

"Jimmie never touched the whip to him," continued grandpa, "and the colt believes the world is full of friendly people."

While the older members of the family were discussing the sorrel, Constance and Eunice had slipped away to the kitchen to prepare the supper. Mary Woodyear had invited Nurse Loring to walk to the river

with her, promising to bring her back just in time for supper.

The girls had wreathed the back of their father's chair with garden lilies and wild ferns. Mrs. Smith had sent over a big bunch of mignonette and sweet peas for Nurse Loring and these stood beside her place at the table. At each place lay a long slip of paper giving the menu in the form of a circus bill. At the top of these slips Eunice had neatly printed: "This entertainment is given in honor of Mr. Henry Newman's reappearance, and as a celebration of Nurse Loring's birthday."

The girls had worked hard, and Lamb declared that it was the best time of all the summer.

Carl and his mother arrived in good season.

"The doctor will come in time for supper, I hope," Mrs. Smith explained; "he does have to work so hard."

"Well, he has a son who will soon be ready to take part of the work," declared Grandpa Newman, putting a friendly hand on Carl's arm.

Carl flushed uncomfortably. It seemed to him that for the past few weeks everybody had harped on the subject of work. Of course he expected to work some time, he said to himself, after he had finished college and taken his diploma as a physician, but he didn't intend to talk about it all the time.

Just before supper time Jimmie Woodyear came into the sitting-room to speak to Mr. Newman. He was neatly dressed, and as he came smilingly forward to congratulate his employer on his rapid recovery Grandpa Newman felt very proud of him, and all the Newman family regarded him affectionately. Mrs. Smith greeted him pleasantly, and Jimmie turned with a smile to speak to Carl. But Carl's scowl and half-muttered word caused him to turn quickly away. A few minutes later Dr. Smith drove up, and just then Nurse Loring and Mary were seen coming up the path.

"All ready for the celebration supper," announced Constance smilingly, opening the door into the diningroom. As she stood in the doorway, her pretty hair waving about her flushed cheeks, her eyes bright with happiness and her pleasant smile welcoming them all, it was not only her mother and father who gazed upon her with admiration. Every one of the little group looked at her with pride in her girlish grace and sweetness, and Carl Smith was more sure than ever that Constance was not only the finest girl in the world but the prettiest. He greeted Eunice cordially, much to his mother's satisfaction, nodded to Mary in a con-

descending fashion, and returned Nurse Loring's pleasant smile with a nod of dignified salutation.

"I should think Abitha was here," declared Grandpa Newman, looking at the table admiringly; and as they all read the "circus bills" there was much laughter and praise for the young hostesses.

Nurse Loring had just thanked Mrs. Smith for the flowers, when Eunice brought in a tray and stood beside Nurse Loring. The tray was covered with packages wrapped in white paper and tied with gay ribbons. On top stood a large pasteboard lion holding a card in his mouth. On the card was written "Many happy birthday celebrations."

"Why!" exclaimed Nurse Loring. "Is this my party, too? I thought it was all for your father."

"It is specially for you, nurse," her patient assured her.

Eunice held the tray while Nurse Loring took off first a small package, which she undid and exclaimed in surprise. It was a tiny leather case holding the smallest watch Nurse Loring had ever seen. Grandpa Newman had noticed the clumsy silver watch which Nurse Loring wore, and had sent to Boston for this one.

"You can wear it for a locket," grandma explained. There was a box of delicious home-made candy from

Mary Woodyear; the daintily stitched lawn aprons from Constance and Lamb and a pretty gold chain from their father and mother.

Nurse Loring could hardly believe that so much thought had been taken for her. "It looks just as if you all liked me," she said, with a little break in her voice, and grandpa responded:

"It does look that way, doesn't it?" and it took only this to make them all laugh; and as Constance was serving the "Wild Beast" course there was more laughter.

James Woodyear was seated between Mrs. Newman and Mrs. Smith, directly across the table from Carl. The young college student felt it almost an affront that Jimmie should sit at the table with him. He was obliged to acknowledge, however, that there was nothing to criticize in Jimmie's dress or manners. But he would have been quite surprised had he known that his own father, noting Jimmie's finely shaped head, broad shoulders and his look of self-reliance and ability, was looking at his own son half-pityingly and wishing with all his heart that Carl was as well equipped for life as was the young farmer.

Directly after supper Mrs. Newman found an opportunity to explain to Mrs. Smith about Eunice's discourteous behavior toward Carl. "You know the Woodyear children are very dear to us all," she said, "and Carl made some reference to Jimmie which offended my impulsive little girl. She has been so sorry ever since, Mrs. Smith. I hope you will forgive her."

"She must feel ashamed when she sees how generously Carl acts about it," responded Mrs. Smith, and of course I shall forget all about it. But Jimmie Woodyear is a young man now, my dear friend."

There was an evident suggestion in Mrs. Smith's voice, but Mrs. Newman responded quickly, "yes, he is nearly as old as Carl."

Nurse Loring and Mary Woodyear insisted on clearing away after the "Circus supper," and Jimmie quickly excused himself, saying he had work to attend to. Lamb ran out to the dairy to look after the milk, and the older people gathered on the pleasant porch.

"Don't you want to see my sister's dairy?" Constance said turning to Carl with a pleasant smile; and the two young people walked toward the square stone building which served as a dairy for Pine Tree Farm. As they walked along Constance told him something of Eunice's ambitions.

"She wants to live at Pine Tree Farm and make the best butter and cheese in the state," said Constance.

Eunice welcomed them warmly. She felt that Carl had been very generous in not noticing her sarcastic remarks, and had begun to feel that it was just as Constance had said; that he must have a good many fine traits. She enthusiastically explained the processes of dairy work, while Carl stood languidly interested.

"Now run away," she commanded laughingly; "here comes the milk." Carl and Constance walked down toward the orchard.

"Do you really mean that your sister is going to make a drudge of herself doing such work?" asked Carl.

Constance looked at him in surprise. "Why," she responded, "we don't look at any work we like to do as drudgery, do you?"

Carl peered at her through his glasses. If it had been any one else he would have suspected a taunt, but he knew Constance Newman would not stoop to such a thing.

"You see," continued Constance, "I want to teach; I have always wanted to; and I am to begin at Miss Wilson's school this very fall. Of course both Eunice and I will study, and next year she will take a special course at some college in lines that will be of use to her in her work."

"You seem to think that work is everything," said Carl, a little scornfully.

"It's a good deal," responded Constance; "it was hard work that made Pine Tree Farm what it is, and gave us our beautiful home. And it was hard work that gave your father his profession and enables him to help every one."

"I know he worked his way through college," Carl interrupted in an angry tone. "I've had that fact thrown at me often enough, but I'm not to blame for it."

Constance stopped short. She could hardly believe that even Carl Smith could be so silly. The young man stood silent. He wondered what was the matter with his companion.

"It is something for you to be very proud of, Carl," she said slowly, "and your father is working your way through college."

The girl's voice was very kind, almost pitiful, but it pierced the youth's selfishness at last.

"You think that I ought to work, I suppose," he said. "Well, I intend to, when I am ready to do good work."

"You'll always do good work," Constance assured him. She began to feel that she had said too much. "I don't see what I can do until I get my profession," grumbled Carl, as Constance turned back toward the house.

"Do you want to do something?" asked Constance. Carl laughed uneasily. "I'm afraid I do," he re-

plied. "You see, I can't let you and Eunice begin so far ahead of me."

"You'll soon catch up," said Constance.

"But what shall I do?" urged Carl. He was beginning to feel more at his ease. If Constance Newman thought work was such a fine thing he didn't mind showing her that he could work.

"What shall I do?" he repeated.

"Ask your father," Constance answered with a little laugh.

"All right, I'll ask him to-night, and let you know what he says," Carl responded cheerfully.

CHAPTER IX

NEW PLANS

"YES, I know of several jobs that need attention," responded Dr. Smith, in reply to his son's question if he knew of any work he could do.

"What are they?" questioned Carl.

"The most important one is the stable. It needs painting, has needed it for a year past, but I haven't seen my way clear to having it done."

Carl flushed at this, realizing perhaps for the first time that every penny of his father's income had been counted in order that he might go prosperously on through his college course.

"What color do you want it?" Carl asked.

His father looked at him in surprise. "Do you really mean that you intend to undertake painting the stable?" he asked.

Carl nodded. "Yes, I'd like to do it. It will help pay for my board," he concluded with a little laugh. "You see I'm twenty now, and ——" The boy faltered, hardly knowing how to explain his new ambitions.

A new expression came into Dr. Smith's face, but he made no response, and Carl went on:

"It's only a month before college opens. I wish I had begun work earlier in the summer. I might have earned a dollar or two toward my expenses."

"Haven't you put in your time in study?" questioned his father. "I had an idea you might be planning to graduate next year by doing two years' work in one. A year saved is a good thing."

"I'm going to try for it," declared Carl. A week earlier he would have assured any one that such a thing was entirely out of the question. But Constance's suggestion, and perhaps hearing so much said of the Woodyear boys' energy and success, had stimulated new ambitions. To himself he vowed that he would prove himself worth as much as Jimmie Woodyear.

"The barn is the first thing now," he said. "I'll find out about mixing the paint. I'll do a good piece of work," he concluded, and ran down the piazza steps bound for the village paint shop.

Dr. Smith straightened his shoulders and looked smilingly after him. "Well, I'm thankful!" he said aloud.

"For what?" laughingly inquired Mrs. Smith, who just at that moment came out.

"Well, well, my dear, I didn't know you were about," answered the doctor, "but I have just been having a talk with Carl. I really believe we are going to be proud of him."

"I am proud of him now," declared his mother.

"Wait a week and you will have reason to be," said the doctor, and started off on his morning round of visits, leaving Mrs. Smith to wonder what surprise was in store for them.

That afternoon Mary Woodyear and Constance drove to the village. As they passed the Smith place Mary exclaimed in wonder:

"Constance, look! Do you see who that is painting the stable?"

Constance looked. "It's Carl," she replied quietly.

"He has on blue overalls, and he is actually at work," continued Mary, as if she could hardly credit the evidence of her own eyes. "See, he is waving his hat to us."

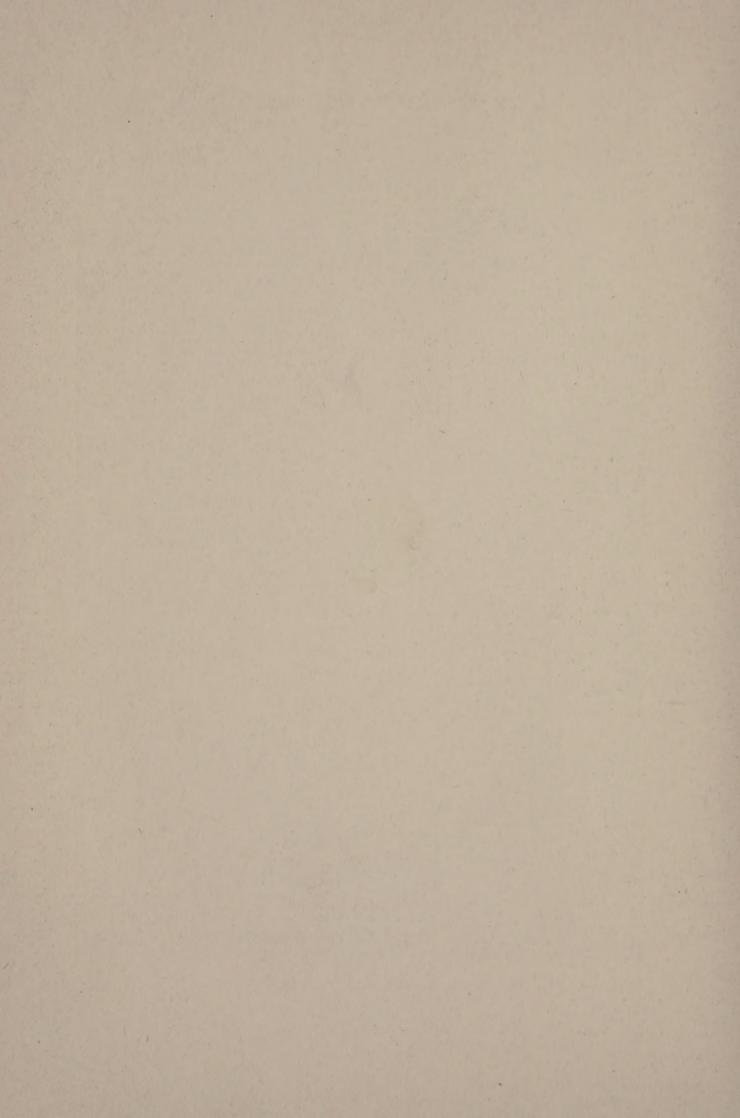
The girls waved their hands in response, and in a moment had passed out of sight of the workman.

"Did you ever expect to see such a sight as that?" questioned Mary laughingly.

"I am glad he is painting the stable; it has needed it for a long time," replied Constance, as if it were quite



THE WORK OF THE DAIRY



a matter of course that Carl should be doing a piece of work so much in need of being done.

Mary said no more to Constance, but on her return home she again expressed her astonishment to Jimmie, whose only response was: "It's time the young man got busy."

"But painting a stable, Jimmie! If Carl Smith condescends to work you would think he'd do something more—well—more——" and Mary hesitated, at loss for the right word.

"More ladylike," supplied Jimmie smiling. Mary laughed in response, and there was no further discussion of Carl's employment.

Eunice and Grandma Newman found the work of the dairy more and more interesting.

"Eunice has a real gift for dairy work. She is as careful as I am myself," grandma would declare admiringly to Lamb's mother; "but both our girls do everything well."

"I am glad Lamb is so interested in it," responded young Mrs. Newman, "for that means that we shall keep one of our girls at home, and that she will be occupied and happy. When Abitha returns Lamb must take up her lessons again regularly."

"She finds time for her piano practice now," said

grandma. "Poor child, she feels so anxious over her impulsive 'running away.' I am afraid she thinks that we do not trust her as we did before," and grandmother looked very serious.

"I have been afraid of that myself," said Mrs. Newman, "and her father and I both think it would be an excellent plan for her to accept Elinor Perry's invitation for a week's visit with her at her uncle's farm. You know that is where the girls had such a good time on the house-boat party."

"That is a good idea," said grandma approvingly.
"I will have Mary Woodyear come over and help me in the dairy while Eunice is away."

"What about the visit to the Perry farm, Lamb?" Constance asked, as the sisters went up to their room that night.

"It would be fun," replied Eunice, but in so mournful a voice that Constance looked at her in surprise, and said:

"Don't you want to go?"

"I'd love to," declared Eunice enthusiastically. "Just think, Elinor has her own canoe, and we could go out on the river every day. And she has a saddle horse, and so has Mrs. Perry, and her aunt said I could

ride hers; and we could have fine rides. But there, I don't mean to be such a selfish thing, Sister; always thinking about myself!" and suddenly Eunice was in tears.

In a moment the older girl's arms were about her, and at last Lamb poured out all her own unhappiness. She had worried over the affair of the picnic, over her own foolish runaway, and was sure that those she loved could not trust her as they had done before.

"I don't suppose mother and father really want me to go on a visit," she sobbed. "How do they know what dreadful thing I may do?"

"They want you to go, dear, because they think you deserve a reward," said Constance.

"A reward!" repeated Eunice, looking up at her sister.

Constance nodded. "Yes, we all think you have been too industrious. You have worked hard in the dairy and in the house. While I have been sitting on the cool porch studying you have been toiling away in the dairy, and —— "A smile glimmered over Eunice's woebegone face.

"I love to be in the dairy," she declared, "and lots of times when I have been busy there I have thought, 'Poor Sister, worrying her head over those books,' and

all the time you were being sorry for me!" Both the girls laughed at this, and gradually as Constance talked the cloud lifted from Lamb's spirit, and she felt herself once more the trusted and beloved child of the house, and began to make her happy plans for the visit with Elinor.

Mr. and Mrs. Silas Perry lived on a pleasant farm near one of the broad Maine rivers. Their niece Elinor, a girl about Eunice's age and a schoolmate at Miss Wilson's, visited them every summer; and this year a cordial invitation had come for Eunice to spend a week with her friend at the farm. It was here that the "Wawenocks" had had one of their "tribal" celebrations, and where the girls had vowed before Constance, the chief of the tribe, to "be brave, to avoid quarrels, and to live in peace with other tribes."

The sisters talked over that happy summer, and recalled many incidents of the house-boat party.

The next morning it was decided that Eunice should join Elinor, and Grandpa Newman said he would drive her to the Perry farm, about twenty miles distant, the following day.

"We can make an early start," he said, "and get

there in good season. Then I can give the horse a good rest, and return home in the late afternoon."

The sun was just coming up behind the distant hills the next morning, when the big bay horse, which Grandpa Newman always liked to drive, was harnessed into the box buggy and driven around to the side porch where the travelers stood waiting. Jimmie Woodyear lifted the small trunk into the back of the buggy, and handed Mr. Newman the reins, and with gay good-byes they were off for their pleasant ride.

"Isn't this fun, grandpa?" demanded Eunice happily.

Grandpa Newman smiled down upon her. To him she would always be "grandpa's little girl," but as he looked at her he realized that Lamb was no longer a child.

"Doesn't everything smell fresh and sweet?" went on the young girl. "The night I slept in the pine woods, grandpa, there were so many fragrant odors. I shall never forget them."

The sun was behind them, and there was a pleasant morning coolness in the early September day. For several miles their road lay between well cultivated farms, then they climbed a long hill, and on its summit grandpa drew rein. A wonderful prospect was spread

before them. In the distance rose peak after peak. Just below them lay a long fertile valley, and to their right they had a glimpse of the distant river. It was a new scene to the girl, and she gazed upon it with appreciative eyes.

"I have seen this many times, and it's always beautiful," said Grandpa Newman thoughtfully.

It was nearly noon when they drove down the smooth road to the Perry farm.

"I can see Elinor," exclaimed Eunice, as soon as they came within sight of the house.

Elinor was just crossing the road from the fields below, and at the sound of wheels looked up. A moment later the big bay horse had stopped and the two girls were exchanging eager greetings. Mr. and Mrs. Perry came hurrying out, and grandpa was warmly welcomed.

"You have come at just the right minute," declared Elinor. "To-morrow there is to be a rehearsal of the pageant at Falls Point, and I am to take part in it, and you are, too. I promised you would if you came."

"I don't believe I know what a pageant is," Lamb confessed laughingly; "if you hadn't said that there was to be a rehearsal I should think that it might be some sort of a picnic." "Well, really it is," responded Elinor, "although Uncle Silas takes it very seriously. You see it is just two hundred years since the first settlement of this town. And this pageant is in celebration of the fact. It is really going to be a great day for the town. The governor is to be here. There is to be a procession of boats on the river, showing the landing of the first settlers, with Indians coming down to meet them. And on land there will be all sorts of things. You will see at the rehearsal. The big day is next Saturday."

Mr. Perry had many questions to ask Mr. Newman about Dannie Woodyear, whom he had first seen when the house-boat party visited that part of the river several years before. He listened with interest to the account of Dannie's success at the State University, his industry and perseverance, and predicted a successful future for the boy.

Grandpa Newman was greatly interested in the pageant, and declared that he should drive over and see it. He started for home in good season, and had the satisfaction of seeing Lamb her happy laughing self, delighted to be with her friend, who had many plans for the coming week.

CHAPTER X

THE QUARRY ROAD

"How can you rehearse a pageant?" asked Lamb the next morning, as she and Elinor started on horseback for Falls Point.

"Why, just as we used to rehearse our plays at school," answered Elinor.

"But there are to be boats, and horses and oxen in this pageant," said Lamb.

"All the more need of rehearsals," declared Elinor laughingly.

On their way they passed several groups of people bound for the Point, and once turned out to pass a yoke of big oxen plodding slowly along, guided by one of the village boys.

"The Wawenocks ought to be in this pageant," said Lamb; "they used to live on these shores, and they were good to the first white settlers."

"They are going to be in it," responded Elinor; "not our tribe, of course," referring to the summer when the house-boat party had formed themselves into a tribe of peaceful braves, "but some of the young men of the village are to represent the Indians, and I am to be an Indian girl in one of the canoes. You see my great-great-grandfather was one of the first settlers on the river, and Uncle Silas is to be his own great-grandfather and come sailing up the river in a schooner he has hired from Boothbay."

The two girls rode down through the rough pasturelike field which formed Falls Point talking over the picnic they had three years ago, when Dannie Woodyear went through the falls on a log. Elinor introduced Eunice to a number of the village people, and she was invited to become a daughter of the "early settlers," and given a place in the procession.

"Falls Point is just the place for the pageant," declared Mrs. Perry, who had reached the Point before the girls arrived. "You see, there is this fine cove where the canoes will have smooth water, and there is good anchorage for the schooner. Then, under this big oak tree the Indians and white men can sign their treaty of peace. The ox-teams, carrying people to church, can come down this road, and the singing society, which was formed the year of the American Revolution, can sing under the shade of the apple trees."

"Aunt Perry is in the singing society," said Elinor, "and they are all to dress in old-fashioned gowns and bonnets."

"Fortunately for the pageant almost every household has preserved some of its ancestral clothing," said Mrs. Perry. "Silas has two chests full of old dresses and hats, coats and capes, which belonged to his grandfather and grandmother, but they have to be used carefully—they are so tender and worn by age."

The girls had left their horses under the big oak as they walked toward the shore with Mrs. Perry.

"Is it all going to be make-believe?" asked Eunice.
"I mean is it all to be pictures of things that happened in the past?"

"All except the dinner," answered Mrs. Perry laughingly; "there is to be a very real clambake and corn-roast on the beach."

"But that is older than even the early settlers," said Eunice; "those big shell heaps further down the river prove that there were clambakes long ago."

This was the first rehearsal, and people were running here and there, every one making suggestions, and plans were made and remade until at last the affair took definite shape, and Mrs. Perry said that now they could all have a better idea of what to do on the next day, when the rehearsal would be as nearly like the final representation as possible.

"Aunt Perry, mayn't Eunice and I ride home by the Quarry Road?" asked Elinor, as the girls mounted the two handsome saddle horses and turned toward the main road.

"Yes, but remember how narrow that road is in places, and be careful," Mrs. Perry called after them; but the horses were uneasy and nervous from standing so long and had started off at a good pace, so that only Mrs. Perry's "Yes" reached their riders' ears.

"I suppose your aunt was telling us to be home in time for dinner?" suggested Eunice, as the horses came down to an easy canter.

"I suppose so. And we can, easily. The Quarry Road will not take much longer."

Chatting happily the two girls rode on together, until Elinor pointed out a narrow grass-grown road leading up a steep hill.

"This is our way," she said; "there are some deserted stone quarries up here. Years ago they used to blast out great pieces of granite, then they were cut and hammered into shape by workmen, hauled down to the river and loaded on to vessels and carried to New York and Boston. But it has been years since any stone was cut here, and some of the old quarries are half filled with water."

Their road led steadily up-hill. At first there were stunted spruce and fir trees on each side, but gradually these disappeared, and the way became rough and rocky, sloping suddenly away now and then so that Eunice exclaimed once or twice in surprise:

"I shouldn't want to meet an automobile on this road," she exclaimed. "Just look, Elinor!" and she pointed down toward the straight granite wall on their right which ended in a pool of dark water.

"Automobiles never come here," Elinor assured her, "and this is really the only dangerous place on the road. Stop your horse, Eunice, and look! Isn't it a strange-looking place?"

It was indeed a strange-looking place. On the further side of the pool of black water there rose pile after pile of discarded blocks of granite. Openings in the solid vein of rock had been made here and there, and as Eunice looked it seemed as if the very foundations of the earth were being shown to her. The horse she was riding moved uneasily from side to side. He was a nervous creature, and did not like this narrow rocky road.

"Go on, Eunice," suggested Elinor. "Blackie doesn't

like standing," and Eunice gave the word to the willing Blackie, and they moved forward.

The road now widened a little; on one side a vine with crimson leaves clung to a ledge.

"See, Elinor!" exclaimed Eunice pointing to the vine. "That would be the very thing for an Indian maiden to wear on her head when she goes out in her canoe. I'll get it," and bringing the black horse close beside the ledge she slid off his back. Elinor followed her example, and they began gathering the long strands of the trailing vine.

As his rider left his back Blackie looked about in disapproval. He did not like those ledges, and the September sun was too warm for his comfort. He decided he would go home, and with a little snort of independence he kicked out his hind feet and then sprang forward, closely followed by his companion Brownie.

For a moment the two girls looked at each other in dismay.

"Well!" exclaimed Elinor, "I wonder what Uncle Silas will say when those horses come running into the yard."

"It's my fault," said Eunice. "I was the first one to suggest stopping."

"Nonsense!" replied Elinor. "It's Blackie's fault. He has been dancing sideways all the way up the hill. It just means that we have a six-mile walk ahead of us."

"That will make us late for dinner," said Eunice.

"Uncle Silas will probably drive up to meet us. They will see that by both the horses coming home that there hasn't been an accident, and will know that we merely got off and they ran away and left us. We may not have to walk half the distance, after all," said Elinor encouragingly. "We can follow this road; it leads down around the foot of the quarries, and is nearer than the way we came."

Putting the crimson vines around their shoulders the girls started on. The road now began to go down-hill, making sudden little curves, and always with the great gray blocks of granite showing near at hand.

"Would you like to go down into the quarry?" asked Elinor. "See, there is a regular stairway over those rocks. We could go down to that big square block, and from there we could see all the queer places where the stone was blasted out."

Eunice agreed eagerly. Neither of the girls felt the least anxiety about the horses. They had been care-

fully trained, and Elinor was sure that they would go straight back to the Perry farm.

They went down the ledges very carefully, so intent on their undertaking that they did not notice the darkening clouds. As they reached the granite block of which Elinor had spoken a drop of rain splashed upon it.

"Gracious!" exclaimed Elinor. "We are in for a wetting."

"Come on," called Lamb, who was already scrambling up the side of the ledge. "There's a regular cave here; we can stay in there until the shower is over."

An overhanging rock did indeed make a sort of cave, and beneath this the two girls found shelter.

"It came up so quickly that it won't last long," said Elinor hopefully. "And I don't believe we shall get wet at all."

But in spite of their hopes the rain continued. A strong wind came up, and the air grew suddenly chill. Hovering under the rock the girls began to feel cramped and uncomfortable.

"Suppose it should rain all day?" suggested Eunice.

"We'd have to let it rain," responded Elinor with a brave effort at cheerfulness. "I do hope the horses will get home all right."

CHAPTER XI

A DANGEROUS CLIMB

It was not long before the girls were obliged to acknowledge that the downpour was not a sudden shower which would soon cease, but a steady rain that might last for hours. The sky was overcast and heavy, and they could not distinguish even the road beyond the quarry pool. For a time both the girls kept up a pretense of cheerfulness, each trying to make the other laugh by describing themselves as Arctic explorers, wrecked adventurers, and early settlers concealing themselves from the Indians; but this soon came to an end, and they began to realize the gravity of their position.

"Why can't we start and walk home?" suggested Eunice. "We shan't mind a good soaking, and your uncle and aunt will be worried about us. If Mr. Perry comes in search of us he will never look for us in this place."

"No, I don't suppose he would," replied Eunice, "and I should start for home in a minute if I dared to."

"What is there to be afraid of?" asked Eunice.

"I'm afraid we might slip climbing over these wet rocks, and fall into the pool," said Elinor. "You see, it is so foggy that we might easily make a misstep, and I don't dare take the chances."

"But it's dreadful to stay all huddled up under this rock," said Eunice, "and it will not be so many hours now before it will begin to grow dark, and then we shall have to stay here all night."

"I know it, but perhaps it may clear by sunset and then we'll try and get back to the road," responded Elinor.

"We'd better try, whether it clears or not," urged Eunice. But Elinor was not willing to make the attempt. She knew how easily a false step might give either of them a bad fall, and she realized that she must take every precaution to prevent further mishap. Nevertheless as the time dragged uncomfortably by she gradually came to the decision that they must do their best to get home, even if it were a dangerous undertaking to get back to the road.

"Lamb!" she announced suddenly, "I do believe it has set in for a long storm. It may rain all night, and even if it is dangerous, we must try and crawl up the ledges to the road. Now, I know the way better than you, so I will go ahead. I shall keep my hands out in

front of me, and I may decide to go up some places on my hands and knees, and I want you to be just as careful as you can be. Remember that we can't walk off as if it were level ground, but we must think of every step we take."

Eunice agreed instantly. She felt that any risk was better than staying in their present uncomfortable position. Elinor started out carefully, peering through the mist and reaching ahead for possible obstacles. Eunice kept closely behind her. It was a hard scramble. The sharp edges of the rocks hurt their hands, and now and then they crawled up the slope of rocky ledges, where there was but uncertain foothold and only small shrubs here and there to which they could cling.

"I do believe that this is the road," Elinor exclaimed, reaching out a helping hand to Lamb and bringing her up beside her onto a comparatively level surface. "Yes, I am sure it is," she continued joyfully. "I can see the ledge where we got the vines."

"And to think that we had to throw them away after all," said Eunice; for they had decided that the vines must be left in the "cave" lest they should impede their progress.

"Never mind the vines," said Elinor. "Isn't it

good to think that we are really on the road toward home? What time do you suppose it is?"

"Past dinner time," Eunice answered with a little laugh. "What do you suppose your aunt thinks has become of us?"

"Perhaps they have not missed us yet, for they may not have reached home themselves," said Elinor. "If the rain overtook them on their way home they may have gone into some neighbor's house and waited there, just as we waited in the cave, for it to clear away."

"Poor Blackie and Brownie," said Eunice. "I suppose they are standing about in the wet waiting for some one to take care of them."

"This soaking won't improve our saddles," said Elinor. "It is lucky we had on our divided skirts; they are so much easier to walk in."

On they plodded through the pouring rain; their shoes were soon thoroughly soaked, their skirts dripped at every step, and their sailor hats were sodden and uncomfortable. But both the girls felt that this was very much better than huddling under the quarry rocks, and were thankful that no more serious mishap than a thorough wetting had befallen them.

Just as they left the narrow Quarry Road and came

into the broader highway the rain began to slacken, the clouds lifted, and the wind veered into a more favorable quarter.

"It is nearly sunset," said Elinor, pointing to the western sky. "I'm going to throw this hat away. It's simply pulp," and the limp white sailor, which had been so fresh and dainty that morning, was sent hurtling over a fence, followed quickly by Eunice's.

"We might wring some of the water out of our skirts," suggested Eunice, "and I am sure I could walk better if I took off my shoes and stockings."

"So could I," agreed Elinor promptly, and the sodden shoes and stockings were quickly removed, the serge skirts wrung as thoroughly as possible, and the girls started on with more courage.

"Well, I declare!" exclaimed Mrs. Perry as she stood at the porch door and looked down the road. "I do believe those are our girls. Did you ever see such objects?" and she laughed so heartily that Mr. Perry came out to look and laugh too.

"I suppose they got tired of waiting for the rain to stop, and have walked home," said Mr. Perry. "I wonder where they left the horses."

Mr. and Mrs. Perry had not been alarmed by the failure of the girls to reach home in time for the noon-

day meal. They had been quite sure that Elinor and Eunice had found shelter from the storm at some farm-house, and as soon as the rain ceased Mrs. Perry had been watching for their return.

"You must get right into dry clothes," she declared, as the girls set down the wet shoes on the porch. "Run right up-stairs and dress, and I'll have a nice hot supper ready by the time you are ready."

So, for the moment, no questions were asked about Brownie and Blackie.

In a short time the girls were dressed, and came down with glowing cheeks, declaring themselves none the worse for their long tramp through the rain.

"I am so hungry," said Eunice laughingly, as she looked approvingly at the well-spread table, and sniffed the hot chocolate that Mrs. Perry was bringing in from the kitchen.

"Now tell us where you left the horses?" said Uncle Silas, as they were about to sit down to the table.

"Left the horses!" exclaimed both the girls. "Why, they left us! Haven't they got home?" And Elinor gave a hurried account of what had happened; of their dismounting to gather vines, of Blackie's instant departure, followed by Brownie, of their place of shelter during the storm, and of their walk home.

"We supposed of course that the horses came straight home," she concluded.

Mr. Perry at once rose from the table. "They would have come home if something had not happened to them," he said. "I will go after them; a horse with a saddle on is apt to get into trouble if he is loose."

Just then there was a loud rap at the door, and Mr. Perry left the dining-room. In a moment he was back again with a smiling face. "Come out on the porch a minute," he said. "I've something to show you," and Mrs. Perry and the girls quickly followed him.

As they opened the outer door a familiar neigh fell upon their ears. "That's Brownie!" exclaimed Mrs. Perry joyfully. "She always neighs the minute she sees Silas."

Brownie and Blackie stood near the porch steps, their saddles dry, and their coats smooth and shining. Mr. Spinney, a neighbor, was telling Uncle Silas that just before the rain began the two horses had trotted into his yard and he had led them into his stable.

"They had no liking for a wetting," he said laughingly. "I thought likely the girls might have stopped at some neighbor's house, and so their horses started on without them. Glad it's all right," and nodding his

acceptance of Mr. Perry's thanks for the trouble he had taken, Mr. Spinney bade them good-night.

"Now we can enjoy our supper," declared Mrs. Perry as they returned to the dining-room. "To think that you poor children were in such a forlorn place, and I did not have an uneasy thought about you. Elinor never did give me a moment's trouble," she concluded, with a loving glance toward the tall girl who would always seem a child in her aunt's tender thoughts of her.

"I'm real glad we had the rain to-day," continued Mrs. Perry, "even if you girls did get a good soaking; you see it will freshen everything up for the pageant, and lay the dust on the roads. I hope it will be so your grandfather can come over, Eunice."

"Perhaps he will bring Constance," suggested Elinor.

But Eunice hardly hoped for this. She knew that Constance could not very well be spared from home, and she had hardly expected that her grandfather would take the long drive until she remembered that the day after the celebration was the time set for her to return home. Then she thought it very likely that Grandpa Newman would plan to come in time to see the wonderful entertainment.

The two girls were quite ready to go to bed at an early hour that night, for they were obliged to own that they were thoroughly tired. Eunice's room adjoined Elinor's, and as they said good-night Elinor whispered laughingly, "Uncle and Aunt Perry don't seem to think that much has happened to us after all; but I feel as if I'd been taken captive by Indians, wrecked at sea, and rescued after great peril."

"So do I," agreed Eunice laughingly, "and I do think it was quite an adventure."

"I know it was," responded Elinor seriously. "Climbing up those slippery ledges, knowing that if you made a misstep you would go sliding down into that black water, is about as near real danger as I want to be. But don't dream about it, Lamb. And I have a lovely plan for to-morrow," and with a smiling "goodnight," Elinor went to her own room.

"My soul, when I think of the danger those girls were in this afternoon I can hardly contain myself," Mrs. Perry said as soon as Elinor and Eunice had gone up-stairs. "I feel to blame for giving my permission for them to go over the Quarry Road. It's a dangerous place."

"It is indeed," agreed Mr. Perry, "and we have

reason to be thankful that they got home safely. I am sure Elinor would be careful and not venture into needless danger."

"I didn't let on how frightened I was when Elinor was telling me about their climbing up those slippery ledges, and hardly able to see a foot ahead of them," said Mrs. Perry, "and I don't suppose they were a mite afraid."

"Perhaps not," responded Mr. Perry, a little doubtfully.

CHAPTER XII

CONSTANCE'S PROBLEM

The day after Eunice's departure for her visit at the Perry farm, Constance brought down her books to the side porch and prepared for an hour's study. The autumn term at Miss Wilson's school began on the tenth of October, and Constance was determined to be so well prepared in her studies that no one could question her fitness for the place. Since she was a young girl, a pupil at the same school where she hoped so soon to become a teacher, it had been her ambition to some day have a school of her own, and she felt that this position was the first step to it. Her parents had encouraged her in every way, believing it desirable that their daughters should fit themselves for useful work.

As Constance picked up her book from the little table, which had been brought out on the porch for her convenience, she looked out across the pleasant fields and smiled happily. Everything was going smoothly at Pine Tree Farm. Her father was already hobbling about on crutches, Grandma Newman had recovered her usual health, and Nurse Loring was to remain

and help with the work of the house until the return of Miss Abitha Bean, who wrote that she had secured an excellent woman who would be glad of employment at the farm and would come with her. Eunice would be busy and happy with her work in the dairy, and Constance felt that everything at home was just as she wished it; that she could go to her own work knowing that she was not needed at home.

She was thinking of all these things as she began her morning's study, and as her father came out he looked at her approvingly. She made an attractive picture in her gown of pink linen with its white collar and cuffs, her smooth brown hair braided in coils around her head, and her face smiling and happy.

"Just four weeks more, daddy dear, and your grown-up daughter will be a teacher," she said as she pulled the big chair around for her father's comfort.

Mr. Newman's face was more serious than usual as he responded: "That is what I want to talk about with you this morning, my dear."

"Oh, you need not be afraid," said Constance, with a happy little laugh. "I passed all my examinations with great credit.' Miss Wilson said those very words. And since then I have gone over pages and pages of algebra, and reviewed a good many lessons that will come in my course. I shall be a credit to the family!" and Constance laughed again. It seemed to her that no other girl had quite so many reasons for being happy as she had that morning.

There was a moment's silence before her father spoke.

"You would not want to give up this plan of teaching this fall, or rather postpone it for a year, would you, Constance?"

"Oh, father!"

The tone in which these two words were spoken was all the answer her father needed.

"I was afraid you would feel that it was asking a good deal of you, but I am going to ask it, Constance. And I am going to ask it for your sister's sake. Since the affair of the picnic and Eunice's rushing off as she did, poor child, because she felt that we misunderstood and blamed her, your mother and I have felt undecided about her staying here at home without you. She thinks she would be happy with her work and studies, and perhaps she would. But there would not be another young person in the house. So we have come to the decision that it is best for Eunice to return to Miss Wilson's school for the coming year. You see, she is only sixteen, and it will be time enough for her

to take up the dairy work in a year or even two years from now."

It seemed to Constance that everything in the world had changed. She knew that her father and mother would not want her to go away that winter. Instead of being a teacher, addressed as "Miss Newman" by girls not much younger than herself, and feeling that her persevering study had been worth while, and that she was making progress, she must give up all her plans and stay at home.

"Does Lamb want to go?" she asked.

"We have not spoken to your sister about it. It is for you to decide, Constance. Your mother and I realize that it is asking a good deal of you to stay here this winter when you wish so much to begin your work; but we do ask it of you, for your sister's sake. She needs to be with girls of her own age, to learn certain things which life here at the farm cannot teach her. Still, if you decide that you cannot make the sacrifice we will not blame you."

"Why mayn't I teach and Lamb go to school just the same?" questioned Constance. "Mother is to have help, and Miss Abitha will be home for company. I don't see why I need stay even if it is best for Eunice to go to school." "One reason, dear girl, is that we want one of our daughters at home—a selfish reason which we would set aside if need be; but another reason which makes your decision important is that Miss Wilson has written us that, while she is desirous of having you as a teacher in her school, she does not feel it would be a good plan to employ you as a teacher if your sister becomes a pupil. Now," said her father rising from his chair, "I am going to let you think it over and tell me as soon as you have made up your mind."

Constance's book had fallen to the floor as her father talked, and now she stooped down and picked it up and laid it on the table.

"I suppose I'm through with books," she said to herself. "All my studying has been useless. I'll always have to stay at home, I know I shall." For there was no question in the girl's mind as to what she must do. To go away after what her father had said would have been an impossibility to Constance.

"Just because Eunice was silly enough to run off," she thought a little bitterly; but acknowledged to herself that her parents' decision was wise. Eunice did need to be with girls of her own age, and the discipline of Miss Wilson's school would mean a great deal to the younger girl for the coming year.



SHE CLOSED THE DOOR BEHIND HER



"If there were anything I could do to be of use at home, I wouldn't mind so much," went on Constance's thoughts; "but all my plans have been to teach. Eunice would be a good deal more contented than I shall be. I know she won't want to go." But the puzzled and unhappy girl found no satisfactory solution to her problem. The broad fields no longer looked pleasant to her eyes. An hour ago she had believed herself to be the happiest girl in the world; now she knew herself to be the most miserable. She saw her grandfather coming across the yard, and for the first time in her life felt she could not speak to him, and went into the house and up to her own room and closed the door behind her.

Eunice came home from her visit in good spirits. Grandpa Newman had not accepted the Perrys' invitation to attend the pageant, but had come after Eunice on the day set, and they had reached home in the late afternoon. Eunice felt that a great many important things had happened since she left Pine Tree Farm, and was eager to see Constance and tell her of the adventure on Quarry Road, the wonderful rides on horse-back, the excursions down the river to the islands, and, most of all, about the pageant. Eunice had never imagined anything quite so beautiful, and she had

come home full of enthusiasm over it, and determined that there should be a pageant at Pine Tree Farm. She had even decided that the time to have it would be on October first, the date set for the return of Miss Abitha and her father.

She did not confide her plan to Grandpa Newman, for she wanted to tell Constance first. "It is almost as good an idea as Sister's 'circus supper,' "she thought happily.

"Have you missed me?" she demanded laughingly, as the family gathered around her in the sitting-room, and was fully satisfied by the chorus which answered her.

Nothing was said in regard to the change in Constance's plans until the two girls were in their own room. Constance had listened smilingly to Lamb's account of the pageant, and had agreed that it would be just the thing to celebrate the return of their good friend.

"And it will be a good-bye party for you, too, Lamb," the elder sister said tenderly.

"You mean for yourself," responded Lamb. "Oh, Sister, it will be dreadful to have you go away," and the younger girl's face clouded at the prospect of the separation.

"How should you like to go back to Miss Wilson's yourself?" questioned Constance.

Eunice's face brightened at once. "Do you suppose I could?" she asked eagerly. "Of course it will be fun to stay home, and really to feel that I am beginning work seriously, but Elinor is going back to school, and the Glidden twins, and best of all, Sister, you would be there. Probably teach me algebra!" and Eunice laughed at the thought. "Has father or mother said anything about my going back to school this year?"

"Yes, Lamb. It is all settled. You are to begin the autumn term," said Constance. She was smiling, and there was no trace of disappointment or sorrow in her face. She had given up her own plans cheerfully, and had said to her father and mother that she was sure it was best for Eunice to go to school, "and for me to stay at home," she had added with a little smile that went to her father's heart, and made both the father and mother feel that there was not another girl in the world so brave and unselfish as their Constance.

"Let me tell Lamb about it," Constance had pleaded, and her parents had agreed, promising not to speak to Eunice in regard to it until Constance should say that the younger girl knew all about it. "But I can't go back to school," Eunice declared when Constance told her. "You know I can't. Who will look after the dairy? And besides that, I don't want to go—that is, not this year."

But she listened to all Constance had to say of the good times at the school, with Elinor and many of her school friends, and at last said sleepily, "Well, I guess it will come out all right. Perhaps I can learn something more at Miss Wilson's. We'll talk about it to-morrow," and Lamb's tired head sank into her pillow and she was soon fast asleep.

But Constance did not follow her sister's example. She lay long awake, thinking of how differently things were turning out from the way in which she had hoped and planned, and making resolves to herself that she would do her best to be happy and to make those who loved her happy. "And I can't do that by acting as if I were a martyr," she thought. She did not allow herself to feel sad or disappointed. But she had written to her old friend, Rose Mason, now Mrs. Robert Marshall, of her disappointment, and her determination to make the best of it. And Rose had responded, as Constance had been sure she would do, that it was really the best thing for Eunice, and therefore she knew that Constance would find happiness in her winter at the farm;

and added a reminder of the visit Constance was to make her the coming year.

The next day the Newmans heard all about the wonderful pageant, and of Lamb's plan for a similar celebration on Miss Abitha's return. "It's just what she would like," declared Lamb enthusiastically, "and we can have the procession meet her half-way to the village when they come up from the train; then it is sure to be a surprise to her."

The elder Newmans agreed with Eunice that it would be just the thing Miss Abitha would enjoy.

"But you and Constance will have to make all the plans," her mother said, "and do most of the work, for you know September is a busy time at Pine Tree Farm."

"And you are going to send me off to school again!" said Eunice, with a pretense of not being pleased at the idea.

"And I really believe you are glad to go," responded her mother. "What did Constance tell you?" for she wondered a little at Eunice's calm acceptance of the fact.

"Why, she told me that I was to go, that's all. Is there anything more to tell?" asked Eunice laughingly. "Your sister will tell you," her mother replied, and Eunice did not then give the matter a thought.

Jimmie and Mary Woodyear were told about the pageant, and promised to help.

"We have some good news, too," said Jimmie.
"Dannie is to have the last week in September for a vacation and he will be here to help."

This was indeed good news, for they were all very proud of Dannie, of his hard work, and his success. His interest in astronomy had been fostered and encouraged by Miss Abitha Bean when he was a very small boy, and Dannie declared that he should never have believed that he could go to college if Miss Abitha had not encouraged him.

"Dannie will want to have the pageant at night, so we can learn something about the stars," said Constance laughingly. "It will be fine to have him here, and it will please Miss Abitha more than anything else."

The girls began at once to arrange the programme for the day of their friends' return. Eunice had asked many questions while at the Perry farm, and had observed closely, so that now she knew quite clearly just how the pageant should be arranged.

"It must have a name, first of all," she announced.

"And it must be arranged something like a play; and

it must be historical. Now what shall the name be?" and she looked inquiringly at Constance.

"Why, 'The Pageant of Pine Tree Farm,' of course," Constance replied.

CHAPTER XIII

THE NEW CARL

CARL SMITH found that painting a stable was hard work. His arms and back ached; the standing on a ladder, or sitting on a board suspended by two ropes and raised and lowered by a tackle, were uncomfortable positions; and there were times when he almost resolved to give it up, but this his pride would not permit him to do, and when the job was completed he viewed his work with no little satisfaction.

After finishing painting the stable he discovered that there was a good deal to do about his father's place. There were new shingles needed on the roof of the piazza, the lawn required grading and seeding, and fences were out of repair. Carl went sturdily to work on these. His hands grew hard and calloused, his face brown, and he no longer wore white duck clothes. He often wondered, as he spaded up the lawn or set fence stakes, how it was that Jimmie Woodyear always presented such a neat appearance, and one day as Jimmie was driving by where Carl was at work he called out to him, and asked the question.

Jimmie was driving the sorrel colt, and as he answered Carl's salutation he turned out from the road so the two boys were very near each other. Carl left his fence and came and stood near the wagon.

"I don't believe you really ever did hard work," declared the doctor's son. "Look at me; from my feet to my head I look like a regular ditcher, and you, why, you look like a gentleman."

Jimmie nodded smilingly. "I have been at hard work all my life," he responded; "perhaps you remember how I cut off the wood where our house stands, then dug up the roots and ploughed. I was about thirteen then. Of course I very soon found out that I must be more careful about how I looked than boys have to be who are only going to school and playing ball for exercise, so I made it a rule not to get too careless. But this is really only play for you," concluded Jimmie, pointing his whip toward Carl's work.

"Play!" repeated Carl. "Well, I work ten hours a day. I never knew what work meant before. I go back to college next week."

"Yes," said Jimmie, "that's what I meant; that your real work was in your studies."

"It's going to be," said Carl, a little grimly; "and I tell you I've learned a good deal this summer."

"That's good," said Jimmie laughingly. "Of course we want you to learn all you can, because you will be 'Dr. Smith' some time, just as your father is."

"Yes, I am going to help him. This is where I shall live," said Carl.

"Why, you used to say that you wouldn't live in the country," said Jimmie.

"There's something else I have learned this summer," replied Carl, "and this is where I shall make my home and earn my living."

"That's good news. We shall be neighbors," responded Jimmie cordially.

"And friends, I hope," said Carl.

"Of course," said the young farmer heartily, and after a word or two more Jimmie drove on and Carl returned to his work.

During the past month he had been a frequent visitor at the Newman home, and gradually he had come to feel heartily ashamed of his feelings toward Jimmie, and to respect the young farmer's ability and character. He could see that both young Mr. Newman and his father regarded Jimmie as highly as they did any of their friends; and the loyalty of Eunice and Constance was not to be doubted.

"They both think better of him than they do of me,

because he earns his own living," Carl often reflected. He frankly acknowledged to Constance that it was through what she had said to him that he had resolved to begin work in earnest.

"I mean to graduate next year," he told her, on the day of his last visit to the farm before his departure for college. "I'm not going to waste any more time. I'm perfectly sure that I can do two years' work in one; that will save my father a good deal; and after that I shall pay my own expenses."

"Of course," responded Constance in such a matter-of-fact tone that Carl was a trifle astonished. He had felt that to earn his way through the medical school would be an undertaking deserving expressions of surprised admiration. When he had made the same statement to his mother she had exclaimed proudly that it would be a wonderful accomplishment, but at Constance's brief "Of course" he felt less heroic. He almost wished that he had not spoken of it. She apparently thought that to earn one's own living was what every man did.

"You see, I intend to earn my own money very soon," Constance continued, as a little silence fell between the two young people. "As soon as I begin to teach I shall plan to use my money for my own expenses."

Then she told Carl of her change of plans, that she was to stay at home for the winter while Lamb returned to school.

"Eunice doesn't know yet that I have given up teaching for this year," she said, "but I shall tell her. It isn't right for her to look forward to our being at Miss Wilson's school together."

Carl looked at his companion admiringly. "I say," he exclaimed, "I have a great mind to become a pupil at Miss Wilson's myself."

"What for?" laughed Constance.

"So I could learn to be more like"—the young man hesitated a moment, and then concluded abruptly—"more like you. Always thinking of what's the right thing, as you do."

Constance made no response, and after some talk of the wonderful pageant, which Carl would not see, he said good-bye to them all with a new manliness upon which Mr. Newman commented.

"Hard work has done him good," said Constance's father. "I wonder what woke him up?"

There was no response to this, but to herself Eunice took some credit, for she had sometimes wondered if, after all, her outburst at the picnic had not awakened Carl to a sense of his own uselessness. Carl, however, would have given a very different reason. He would have said, as he often did to himself, that it was Constance Newman's frank, outspoken opinion of idleness which had made him realize of how little use he was, and to resolve that he would earn her good opinion.

When it was really decided that Miss Abitha Bean's return should be celebrated by the "Pageant of Pine Tree Farm," the entire family became interested that it should be a success.

"A pageant should have banners and horsemen, prancing steeds and chariots," Grandpa Newman had declared laughingly; "there should be music, and a herald should read a proclamation telling people the wonders they are to behold, and the reason for all the glory and pomp."

"We are going to have a herald, of course," Eunice had responded. "Sister is going to write the proclamation. It is to be written on a scroll, and wound about a gilded stick, and will have a cover of silk with the date embroidered upon it. And the herald, who will be Dannie Woodyear, will read it aloud and then present it to Miss Abitha."

"Excellent!" exclaimed Grandpa Newman. "And of course your pageant will show some of the important historical facts of Pine Tree Farm?"

- "Are there any?" questioned Eunice eagerly.
- "Certainly," declared Grandpa Newman.
- "When Major André marched through what was then the Maine wilderness, he and his regiment, footsore and weary, camped down there in our lower field. My grandfather lived here then, and the soldiers came to his house for milk, and such provisions as he could let them have. They were bound on the fruitless errand of defeating their enemies at Quebec, and I have heard him tell how tired and hungry the men were. But their officers were dauntless and determined, and they pressed on through an unbroken forest."

"How could we bring that into a pageant?" asked Constance.

Grandpa Newman shook his head laughingly. "You will have to work that out for yourselves," he answered. "I will be your historian, but you must make what use you can of the facts."

- "We'll do our best," agreed Constance. "Now what else has happened here?"
- "I think that was the most important historical fact," said Grandfather Newman thoughtfully, "but when my father was a boy he went hunting, and was overtaken by a snow-storm and wandered about for hours. At last two Indians ran across him and took

him to their lodge, and when it cleared they brought him safely home. His father wanted to make them a gift, in appreciation of their kindness, but they would not allow it, and only shook their heads gravely at all his suggestions. My father often told me the story, and of the dinner which his mother prepared for them and which they seemed to enjoy greatly. When they left my grandmother made them promise that every year, on that day, they would come to her house and have dinner with the family.

"This pleased the Indians very much, and they promised, and did come for many years, always bringing some gift, a beautiful foxskin, or beaded moccasins, or a basket, to my grandmother."

"Lovely," declared Eunice. "We will have the friendly Indians, won't we, Sister?"

"Yes, indeed," agreed Constance. "It is lucky Miss Abitha is coming home on Saturday, for we want the children from the village school to help us, and Saturday is a holiday."

"It's going to be a good deal of work," suggested the girls' mother, "and you have not so very much time."

"We will begin this minute," said Constance. "I'll write the herald's proclamation before I go to bed."

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There was something else Constance had resolved to do before she slept, which seemed infinitely more difficult than the herald's proclamation, and that was to tell Lamb that she was not to teach at Miss Wilson's school that winter.

CHAPTER XIV

PREPARATIONS FOR THE PAGEANT

"How will you begin it, Sister?" questioned Eunice eagerly, as Constance sat down at her desk, arranged paper and ink-stand, and took up her pen to write the opening lines of the herald's proclamation. "You ought to begin with 'Ho!' or something startling, hadn't you?"

"First of all," responded Constance, "I am going to tell you some important news," and then, without waiting for a question from Eunice, she said: "I am not going to teach at Miss Wilson's school this winter."

Eunice looked at her in astonishment, but before she could speak Constance continued, "Father thinks it isn't best."

At these words the cloud lifted a little from Eunice's face, and she answered slowly, "Well, of course you are pretty young to teach. And of course I sha'n't know what to do without you; but it will be nice for mother to have you at home. But how can I get along, Constance, with no 'big sister' to help me out of scrapes and tell me what to do?"

"Keep out of scrapes, and think what you ought to do before you do it," responded Constance laughingly. She felt grateful to Eunice for accepting the fact in so sensible a fashion, and now wondered at herself for so dreading to tell her. "It was because I didn't realize that she is no longer a little girl," she thought to herself.

"Tell me the first line of the proclamation, Sister, and I'll go away and leave you to work out the rest in quiet," said Eunice.

"There will be a dozen 'first lines' before I get one right," said Constance, "so don't wait;" and Eunice, with a little nod of comprehension, and a loving pat on her sister's shoulder, went off in search of her grandmother; for Eunice and her grandmother were always glad of each other's company, and passed many happy hours together. It was a great comfort to Grandmother Newman that her granddaughter and namesake was so interested in all the things that she herself cared so much for.

Left alone Constance began to think seriously of the work before her. She had announced that she should write the herald's proclamation, which was to combine greeting and welcome to Miss Abitha Bean with an introduction, explanation and description of the pageant

prepared in her honor, and now it seemed a difficult undertaking; one not to be easily compassed in an hour or two.

"Of course a herald must attract instant attention with his very first word," Constance decided, and after some thought she fixed upon the first word. It should be "Hear!" "Now what next?" she pondered, beginning to feel that even the opening line would be beyond her powers. "And after the proclamation there is the whole pageant to plan," she reflected, a little discouraged at the prospect. "We ought to have begun early in the summer. I don't want it to be funny; I want it to be impressive," she thought; "something that the school children will remember, and that I need not be ashamed of. I had courage to say that I would write it," and she laughed a little at her own assurance.

All that afternoon she sat at her desk writing and rewriting the lines of the proclamation. At supper time she appeared in the dining-room with an unusually serious expression, and announced that she did not wish any one to speak to her, or to come into the little room where her desk stood, that evening.

"Does it begin 'Ho!'" questioned Lamb, laughingly.

"No," responded Constance, "and I began to think

that it wouldn't begin at all; but it has, and now I think I can finish it."

"Not too long, daughter," suggested Mr. Newman; "cut out a good deal that you want to say, and write only what people will want to hear, and hearing will remember."

"I'll do my best," replied Constance.

"You must have your list of characters ready as soon as possible, so we can begin on costumes and arrangements," said Mrs. Newman; "remember you have not much time for preparations."

The girls began to feel that a pageant was a very serious thing, and Constance went back to her desk determined to complete not only the proclamation that night but a "scenario," showing the acts and persons of the pageant.

The next morning Constance came to her father with a number of large sheets of paper closely covered with writing. "I wish you would look over these, father," she said.

Mr. Newman glanced them over, and then read the herald's proclamation. "Ask your mother and Eunice to come here, will you, my dear?" he said, and in a moment Constance returned followed not only by her mother and sister but by Grandma and Grandpa Newman.

"I want you to hear the programme of the pageant," said Mr. Newman. "Constance has outlined it here, and I think you will all say that if the pageant goes as she has planned it that Miss Abitha will not only feel very proud of her former pupil but that those who take part, and those who look on, will be pleased and entertained. And you will agree with me that that is all any pageant can accomplish."

Constance flushed happily at her father's praise, and interposed that she had only outlined the pageant; that they would all have to help in filling out the parts, and by making suggestions.

"Of course," agreed Grandpa Newman. "Now, read on, Henry!"

"First," began Mr. Newman, "is the formation of the procession. It is as follows: Herald, Dannie Woodyear, carrying the state flag, and bearing this proclamation which he is to read 'in a loud voice,' and then present 'with a low obeisance' to Miss Abitha. I will read the proclamation:

"' 'Hear! Hear! Hear!
This banner that I bear—
The Pine, the emblem of our State,
The Motto "I direct"—
I bring in greeting with our love and service.

Lady, your coming home makes all hearts glad.

We seek to please with pictures of the past,

And with fair promise of the days to come.

First comes the child called Joy, and then bright

Hope:—

These introduce the Virtues, close behind,
Of Industry, and Friendship. Then we fain
Would show you Happiness and gracious Peace.
And last we bid you welcome to the Feast—
Spread bounteously beneath the shade of trees;
Where you shall greet again each valued friend,
And Happiness and Peace shall crown thee Queen!
Hear! Hear!
The Pageant now begins!
To Music let fair Joy and glorious Hope
Advance, and under this brave banner lead
The Host that gathers here from Pine Tree Farm.'"

As Mr. Newman concluded there was a chorus of admiration. Then Eunice exclaimed anxiously, "But, Sister, what shall we do for music?"

"Grandfather used to play the drum; he has one now," said Constance, "and Dr. Smith plays the cornet.

And we must have a chorus of children."

"'Hear!'" Mr. Newman repeated. "You must hear the plan, as Constance has written it: 'Directly behind Dannie, who will step to one side and name the characters as they advance, will be the musicians, who will also step to one side and play their best, and then

the chorus. Then advances "Joy," who must be the prettiest little boy we can find in the school, and he must be dressed in blue and gold, and wear a crown of big, gilt stars. Then "Hope" must be all white and The Virtues, Industry and Friendship, can come hand in hand. Industry can bear sheaves of wheat and be dressed in crimson, and Friendship can carry an armful of flowers and wear white. Happiness must be another pretty child bringing fruit and flowers, and Peace is to be Mary Woodyear in her lavender muslin with a gold band on her head (she always looked like peace anyway) and she will carry big lilies, which we will make out of tissue paper. Then come two Indians, Jimmie and some other tall boy, leading a white boy between them. That is the "Return of Vinal Woodyear to his home by friendly In-Then comes grandfather's new carriage with the big horses, and the horses must be all fixed with flags and gold ribbons, and in the carriage grandma and mother and father and Nurse Loring."

Mr. Newman finished reading and handed the sheets of paper back to Constance.

"I think you have blocked it out very well," he said. "Now your real work begins. You will have to select those you want to sing; have them rehearse, and

prepare their costumes. You will have to decide at just what point on the road you wish to meet Miss Abitha. It must be a place where there is room by the roadside for your procession. Then, too, the 'feast,' which your herald announces, will have to be prepared for. You have a busy time ahead."

"Yes," agreed Constance. "I wish I could have brought in Major André and his soldiers, but, you see, we haven't people enough for that."

"You do very well without an army," responded her father smilingly.

"I thought we could use those rolls of tissue paper in the attic, that we had left from our last Hallowe'en party, to make some of the costumes and for banners," said Constance.

"We can get plenty of cheap cambric in different colors at the village store," added Mrs. Newman, "and I know the Woodyears will do all they can to help us. Where shall we have supper, Constance?"

"I thought we might have it in the orchard," suggested Constance. "You see it won't really be supper, because it will have to be in the afternoon. Miss Abitha's train gets in about noon. The pageant and all won't take very long, and we shall all be back here before three."

"You and Eunice better talk it over with Jimmie and Mary," said Grandma Newman, "and decide on just how many people there will be to feed. And then you ought to go to the village and select your 'Joy' and 'Hope,' and find out about your singers. I hope you haven't undertaken too much," concluded grandma a little anxiously.

"Sister, it's wonderful!" declared Eunice, as the two girls started off across the fields toward the Woodyears' home. "I don't believe Miss Abitha could have planned anything better herself." Both the Newman girls felt that no higher praise than this could be given; for Miss Abitha had planned so many good times for them all through their childhood, had taught them so many important things, and proven herself so wise and kind a friend and teacher, that Constance and Eunice were both ambitious not only to please Miss Abitha, but to be as much like her as possible.

"What shall Dannie wear?" asked Mary Woodyear, who gave an enthusiastic agreement to her friend's plan.

"I thought I would let Dannie decide that for himself," replied Constance.

"Perhaps that is the best way," rejoined Mary, with a little laugh, in which the others joined; for they all knew Dannie Woodyear to have very decided ideas of his own, and they were quite sure that he would want to select the colors which he would wear as the herald of the day.

"Grandpa has a splendid state flag," said Constance.

"The best place for the pageant to form is under that big oak, just at the turn in the road," said Jimmie. "There is plenty of room there. Who is going to the station to meet Miss Abitha and her father?"

"I am," answered Constance.

"Wouldn't it be a good idea to make a sort of arbor with a high seat under the oak tree for Miss Abitha?" suggested Jimmie. "Dannie and I could do that. Then the procession could pass her more easily."

"You always think of the right thing to do, Jimmie Woodyear."

Jimmie laughed at her praise, but he felt that a word of approval from Constance Newman was worth working for.

CHAPTER XV

MISS ABITHA'S RETURN

MISS ABITHA BEAN stepped off the train and turned to her father with a happy smile.

"Look, father!" she exclaimed; "there is Constance to meet us," and in another moment the carryall, with Constance driving one of the steady farm horses, drove up close to the little platform, and Constance was out with her arms about her good friend, and telling her how glad she was that she was at home again.

"Where is Eunice?" inquired Mr. Bean.

"She will come to meet you further down the road," replied Constance, "and Jimmie will drive over for your trunks later on."

Miss Abitha was full of eager inquiries as to everybody at Pine Tree Farm. The woman who was to assist in the household work would arrive the next day, she said, and had much to tell Constance of her restful and happy summer.

"This horse doesn't step off as briskly as usual," commented Mr. Bean; for Constance was driving

slowly in order not to reach the arbor beneath the oak tree too soon.

"He can go faster. It's just my driving, Mr. Bean," she responded laughingly, and just then they came to the turn in the road where the big oak stood. At that very moment the clear silvery note of a cornet was heard, and Constance had just time to turn the horse and drive behind the oak, persuade her passengers to dismount, and then lead them to the clematis-covered seat beneath the oak before the cornet was heard again, this time closely followed by the flute and drum, and Miss Abitha had no time to even exclaim before the little procession, with its music, waving banners, and happy faces came in view.

"My soul!" whispered Miss Abitha to herself, as she distinguished Dannie Woodyear, in a white tunic with bands of gold, who approached, closely followed by the musicians, who stepped to one side, as Constance had directed, and "played their best."

The herald made his smiling obeisance before the "Queen of the Pageant" unrolled his scroll, and read his proclamation. Then, approaching the "throne" he bowed again and handed the silk-covered sheets to Miss Abitha, who received them with a delighted smile. This was indeed a home-coming after her

own heart, such a one as she would have planned herself.

"Joy" and "Hope" came dancing up, duly announced by the herald, closely followed by "Industry" and "Friendship," who declared themselves by a graceful verse which Constance had written. "Happiness" had a little song, and Mary Woodyear as "Peace" made Dannie more sure than ever that his sister Mary was the most wonderful girl in the world.

The October day was warm with sunshine. The autumn foliage was at its best, and as the gay little procession filed by and grouped itself about the clematis arbor it made a picture well worth seeing. Dannie escorted Miss Abitha and her father to the carryall, which had been swiftly ornamented with flags and banners, and which now led the way back to Pine Tree Farm. The "feast" was spread in the orchard. Mr. and Mrs. Woodyear and Nurse Loring had seen the procession start, and had then hurried to spread the long tables.

It was Dannie who led Miss Abitha to her raised seat at the head of the table, and Grandma Newman sat beside her.

"Industry" and "Friendship" and "Peace" saw to

it that every one was well served, and not until a little chill was felt in the air did the happy party decide that the "pageant" was really over; and Miss Abitha, proud and happy, was escorted to her own door by the delighted herald.

"It has been a wonderful home-coming," she had said, a little brokenly, to Constance's mother. "I don't see how our girls ever planned it."

"They planned it because you have been doing just such things for them ever since they can remember," replied Mrs. Newman.

But Miss Abitha shook her head. She felt quite sure that no one except Constance and Eunice Newman could ever have planned and carried out the Pine Tree Pageant.

She felt that she was the most fortunate woman in the world as she placed the silken covered herald's scroll away among her most cherished possessions. She thought of Dannie Woodyear, too, with proud satisfaction, and reflected that perhaps she had been of some use to Dannie, as indeed she had; for it was Miss Abitha who had first encouraged the boy's interest in the stars, had loaned him books on astronomy, read and studied with him, and, with the aid of Constance and Eunice, made it possible for him to accept a scholar-

ship at the university, where he was doing good work and earning his own way.

That her practical good sense had been of service to the Newman girls she could not deny, and that she was loved and valued this wonderful home-coming proved; and Miss Abitha sang happily as she put her little house in order, and began to wonder if there were not some pleasant thing which she could do for some one else. And it was not long before she had discovered that there was a person in her vicinity who could be given some of the happiness with which she felt her own cup overflowed.

"It was a success, a wonderful success," exclaimed Dr. Smith, as he shook hands with Constance after the pageant. "I wish Carl could have seen it."

"I wish he might have been here," responded Constance cordially.

"Carl has begun the year finely. I shall be very proud of him if he keeps on in the work he has started," said the doctor. For a moment he was tempted to tell Constance that it was her words, her example and good sense, which had awakened his son's ambition, but he kept silent, and said his good-byes briefly to the others.

It had been decided that Nurse Loring was to leave on Miss Abitha's return, and, on the day after the pageant, the matter was discussed by the Newman household.

"She seems very sad about leaving," said Constance.
"I suppose it is because she hasn't any home to go
to."

"And she hasn't any other patient," added Eunice.

"She says the younger nurses get the really difficult cases."

"Perhaps she'd like to stay and visit us a week or two?" suggested Grandma Newman.

"I doubt if she would," said the girls' father slowly.

"Nurse Loring wants to be of use."

It seemed a difficult problem. They all wanted to show some kindness to the good woman who had proven herself so ready to help them, but they hardly knew how to do it. Whatever they did must be quickly decided upon, as she was already packing her trunk.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Eunice, as a little silence came over the group.

"What is it, Lamb?" asked Constance.

"I was thinking that we would all be so happy when Miss Abitha got home, and now we are all feeling badly about Nurse Loring," said Lamb. "And I shall be going away myself next week." "Why not ask Miss Abitha?" suggested Grandpa Newman, and as he spoke Constance's face brightened.

"Let me ask her. May I? I have a plan—a lovely plan," she declared so eagerly that they all laughed, and Constance ran out of the room and across the road to Miss Abitha's cottage.

"Miss Abitha! Miss Abitha, I want you to say 'Yes' to a plan. You must! You must!" exclaimed Constance, quite forgetting that she was grown up, and jumping up and down as impatiently as she had been used to do as a very small girl.

"Is it safe for me to say 'Yes'?" demanded Miss Abitha smilingly.

"Listen! You know Lamb is going back to Miss Wilson's school next week. And I am not to teach there this year."

Miss Abitha had not heard of this decision, but Constance went on so rapidly that she had no time to ask questions.

"Now, Nurse Loring hasn't any home, and no patient waiting for her, and she has to go back to a boarding-house in Portland." Constance stopped to take breath. Miss Abitha was looking at her in surprise. "Can't you see, Miss Abitha! Can't you see!" exclaimed the

excited girl. "She loves to do housework, and she likes girls. She could attend to the house, this house, your house, I mean; and you and I can open a school. There!"

"Where?" asked Miss Abitha, looking about, as if in search of a schoolroom.

"Right here. Right in your house. The sitting-room for recitations, your parlor for a library. Grandpa Newman can finish off three rooms in the attic for sleeping-rooms, and you have two extra rooms. You know Miss Wilson always has applicants after her term commences, and she would send them to you."

"My soul!" exclaimed Miss Abitha in a faint voice. It seemed to her that Constance's imagination and desire to teach had indeed run away with her.

"Sit down, my dear girl, and let us talk this over," she said, and she succeeded in soon convincing Constance that her plan was not practical or possible. "But I have a plan which may help Nurse Loring and you too," she concluded hopefully. But Constance did not feel much interest. Although she had seen the wisdom of her father's decision that she should not return as a teacher to Miss Wilson's school, she was still eager to make some use of her preparation to teach.

"I shall have to talk with Nurse Loring before I can

even tell you about it," continued Miss Abitha. Constance nodded, and the two went back to the Newman house together. Eunice came running to meet them with a look of eager inquiry. Constance shook her head. "My plan was silly," she announced, "but Miss Abitha wants to see Nurse Loring."

"And then I want to talk with all the family," said Miss Abitha.

The talk with Nurse Loring seemed a very long one to the impatient girls, but at last Miss Abitha came down-stairs.

"I have been telling Nurse Loring of something I have wanted to do for a long time, and she has agreed to help me if the Newman family approve of it," and she made a very pretty bow to Grandpa Newman.

"I want to start an Industrial School for the daughters of our neighbors," she announced. "It really is Miss Constance Newman's plan. And it is made possible by Nurse Loring agreeing to stay and take charge of my household affairs, so that Constance and I can give our time to our pupils. I want to begin to-morrow to visit all the homes where there are girls from ten to fifteen years of age and see if their mothers will not send them to me on certain days of the week to be taught cooking, knitting and sewing. I expect, too,

later on, to have classes in mathematics and literature, conducted by Miss Constance Newman."

"I haven't any objection, Abitha," said Grandpa Newman, and when Constance's mother noted the happy look on her daughter's face, she, too, agreed cordially.

"It certainly provides nicely for Nurse Loring," said Grandma Newman, "but I'm afraid you won't get many pupils, Abitha. Of course mothers teach their daughters to cook and knit, and they learn mathematics and literature at the village school."

But Miss Abitha declared that there were many mothers who did not think of teaching their girls household arts, and who would be very grateful for just this opportunity for them to learn.

"It's lovely, Miss Abitha," Constance said, as she went out to the porch with her good friend. "And I know it's the beginning."

"The beginning of what?" questioned Miss Abitha.

"Of the Newman school," responded Constance.

CHAPTER XVI

THE FIRST PUPILS

MISS ABITHA, as she visited the prosperous families of the village and discussed her plan for teaching their young daughters household arts, was obliged to own that Grandma Newman had been right in her prediction. Most of the mothers declared that their young daughters were receiving that very training at home, and Miss Abitha began to wonder if she would not have to give up her hopeful plan, and if Constance's teaching would not be still further postponed.

Constance had promised not to ask any questions until Miss Abitha should speak of the subject, and on the second day of her canvass for pupils Miss Abitha had almost determined to tell Constance that she had failed. She was driving slowly toward home, after a series of useless visits, when she reached this decision. And just then something happened.

A big touring car came whirling along the road, and made a sudden swerve to avoid Miss Abitha's steady horse and covered phaeton. Then there was a sound of splintered boards as it crashed into the fence on the

opposite side of the road, a loud outcry, a series of spluttering explosions, and the big automobile, half over the fence and half in the gutter, came to a standstill.

"My soul!" ejaculated Miss Abitha, who had involuntarily brought the steady horse to a full stop, and who now jumped from the carriage, leaving the trusty animal to twist his head and gaze after her in tolerant surprise as she ran across the road to see if any one was hurt.

The chauffeur, evidently inexperienced, and now overcome by his misfortune, was endeavoring to persuade a portly lady of middle age that he was not to blame for the wrecked car. The other passengers were two half-grown girls, who were evidently sadly frightened by what had befallen them.

"And to think how nearly we ran you down!" exclaimed the lady, as Miss Abitha approached. "I am Mrs. Alexander. It is really a wonder that we are not all crushed out of existence by this man's carelessness. I don't even know where we are," she concluded hopelessly.

Miss Abitha persuaded her to leave the car and go to the other side of the road, which she did, followed by the girls. Miss Abitha directed the chauffeur to the nearest blacksmith shop, and agreed to wait at the scene of the accident with Mrs. Alexander until his return.

"Those poor children!" exclaimed Mrs. Alexander.

"I declare I don't see what will happen next. The school where I expected to send them had to close, typhoid fever cases, and won't open until January. My plans were all made to go South, and my house rented, when I got word to come after these children. They are my brother's daughters, Mildred and Mabel Prescott, and what on earth I can do with them I don't know. And now this dreadful accident has stranded us in this place!"

Miss Abitha felt her breath coming more quickly. Here were two girls, apparently motherless, really in search of a school; and here was she, Miss Abitha Bean, looking for pupils. She looked at Mrs. Alexander more closely, and resolved that Constance's "beginning" should have Mildred and Mabel for its first pupils.

"You must not consider yourself stranded," she said.
"My own home is near here and I shall be glad for you and your nieces to stay as long as you may wish."
She then told her new acquaintances something of Pine Tree Farm, and of Constance and Eunice.

"I wish they would take these girls in at that school," declared Mrs. Alexander.

Miss Abitha looked at the girls more closely. They were thin, carelessly dressed, and not particularly attractive. She was sure that there was a good deal she could do for just such girls as these, and she knew that a girl like Constance would be an inspiration to them. She was eager for her new acquaintances to see Constance and Eunice.

It was not long before the chauffeur returned from the village accompanied by several men. The big car was not so badly damaged as Mrs. Alexander had feared. Arrangements were made to have it taken to the village, where it could be repaired. One of the men promised to bring the travelers' luggage to Miss Abitha's house, and Miss Abitha persuaded Mrs. Alexander to seat herself in the roomy phaeton. Mildred sat between them, while Mabel curled herself into as small a space as possible at their feet.

So far neither of the girls had said a word. They were not happy-looking children, such as Miss Abitha was used to, and she firmly resolved that if these girls

were given into her care they should have as happy a time as she could give them.

When Miss Abitha stopped in front of her pleasant house, and Nurse Loring, still wearing her white cap and apron, opened the door, and smiled upon the newcomers, Mildred and Mabel exchanged a delighted look, and Miss Abitha heard Mildred, the elder of the two, whisper to her sister, "It's just like a book," and Mabel's response, "It's better than a book, for we are in it."

It did not take long to make the newcomers comfortably at home. Eunice came running over and was told about the accident, and introduced to Mildred and Mabel. Mrs. Alexander had decided to lie down in her room for an hour's rest, but the girls were eager to look about the place, and Eunice at once offered to show them the young colts, the calves, the fat old pony Jet, of whom she told them many interesting things. Mildred and Mabel were quite sure that this was the most fortunate day of their lives. Lamb gave them big sweet apples to nibble on, as she led them about the stables, and when at last she took them into the house and showed them the sitting-room closet and told them of the wonderful things each shelf used to furnish for Constance and herself when they first came to Pine Tree Farm, her little visitors smiled happily

and were full of eager questions, and came running back to Miss Abitha saying that Pine Tree Farm was the loveliest place in the world.

At supper time Mrs. Alexander came down-stairs rested, and not so discouraged as she had been a few hours earlier. She looked approvingly upon Nurse Loring, and when Grandpa Newman and Constance came over she was at once favorably disposed toward the household of Pine Tree Farm, and listened with more patience than usual to all that Mildred and Mabel had to tell her.

If Miss Abitha had designs to secure these girls for Constance's first pupils, Constance had no idea of it herself. When Mrs. Alexander told the story of the little girls, whose father and mother were both dead, Constance thought only of their loneliness, and wished that their childhood might have the happiness her own had known. She was very kind to the girls, and promised them a ride behind Jet, a visit to her attic study, and told them stories of the birds who made their winter home in the orchard trees.

Mildred and Mabel thought how lovely it would be if they only had a big sister like Constance, and when they went to bed that night they had many happy plans for the coming day. The second day of her stay Mrs. Alexander felt that her car had been wrecked to a good purpose, for she was resolved to ask Miss Abitha to take charge of her nieces for the coming year. She had watched Constance and Eunice, and it seemed to her that if Mildred and Mabel could grow into just such girls she would be satisfied; and she lost no time in asking Miss Abitha if she would consent to keep them. Miss Abitha promptly told her of the plan she and Constance had; of Constance's preparation to teach, and of her disappointment when it had seemed wise to wait until another year before returning to Miss Wilson's as a teacher.

"It is a Providence," declared Mrs. Alexander.

"Nothing could have been arranged better. I can leave the children here and feel it is the best place in the world for them. And couldn't you take three or four more girls? I know of several whose parents would be glad to have them in just such a school."

This suggestion was one on which Constance and the Newman family would have to be consulted, but by the time the big automobile was ready for Mrs. Alexander to continue her journey, it was decided that not only would Mildred and Mabel Prescott remain as pupils at the "Newman School," but that Miss Abitha

would receive four other girls, who had been students at the school which had closed for the autumn term.

"I know just what it is going to be," announced Lamb as Constance told her what had been decided. "It is going to be all our good times over again; winter picnics in the woods, snow-shoeing, Miss Abitha's 'surprises,' and all; and I won't be in it."

"But you will be having happy times with Elinor Perry at school," Constance reminded her, "and you will be coming home for the Christmas holidays, and then you can see what kind of a teacher your big sister is."

Unfortunately Mildred and Mabel had not been told of their aunt's plan for them to remain with Miss Abitha. They had been so happy during the first few days of their stay, making the acquaintance of the Woodyear children, listening to Constance's wonderful stories, and enviously following Lamb from the house to the dairy, that to leave a place of so many delights began to seem too great a sacrifice to consider, and they made a plan of their own.

"Aunt Frances says that she must go to-morrow," twelve-year-old Mildred announced to her younger sister. "She says that she must go," she repeated, "so I suppose she would go with us or without us."

- "Of course we'll have to go too," replied Mabel.
- "Not if we couldn't be found," answered Mildred mysteriously.
 - "But she would find us," objected Mabel.
- "I have a plan," responded her sister, "and if you will do just as I say we can probably stay here a week."

Mabel assented eagerly, without even waiting to hear the plan. For a whole week at Miss Abitha's it was worth risking even her aunt's displeasure.

"We mustn't wait until to-morrow," said Mildred, because that wouldn't be quite fair. But we must disappear to-night. Then if she must go to-morrow, why she will go, and let Miss Abitha find us. And if she wants to find us herself, why, she'll tell the chauffeur that she doesn't know when she can start, and then after we are found it will take another day or two to get ready."

"Where shall we hide?" questioned Mabel.

"I've found a lovely place. It's right up over our room. You know that square wooden place in the corner of the ceiling. It's a trap-door. You can pull it up with that long cord that hangs down. I tried it. And up there is a little cubby-hole just big enough for us."

"How do you know?" asked Mabel.

"Well, I wondered what the cord was for, and I pulled it, and the door went up just as easy."

"The door may go up, but perhaps we can't," said Mabel.

"Yes, we can. There is a ladder in the closet on purpose to go up with, and after we both get up we can pull the ladder up after us," said Mildred. "Come up-stairs and I'll show you how easy it is." And Mildred led the way. Just at that very time Mrs. Alexander had decided that after tea that evening she would tell the girls that Miss Abitha had agreed to receive them as pupils, and that Constance Newman would be their teacher. She was quite sure that the girls would be delighted with the decision, for she had never seen them so happy and contented as during the past few days. But when supper time came neither Mildred nor Mabel was to be found.

"I can soon discover them," Constance declared laughingly, when Miss Abitha told her that they were late for tea. "Dannie Woodyear has set his telescope on the hill, and the girls have been eager to look through it; probably they are up there." But Dannie said the girls had not been up the hill.

"It seems like old times," said Grandpa Newman laughingly, "to have two small girls to hunt for."

"It wasn't so very long ago that you were looking for a very silly big girl," Eunice whispered; for she could not forget how much trouble her own thoughtlessness had brought on those she loved.

All the places where Eunice and Constance had been used to hide were carefully searched, but no one thought of the cubby-hole over the girls' sleeping-room where, cramped, uncomfortable and hungry, Mildred and Mabel crouched in the darkness.

"Do you suppose there are rats here?" Mabel whispered. "I hear funny little creepy noises."

Even Mildred's courage faltered after an hour or two of the darkness, when even the tiny window gave no gleam of light. She began to wonder if they could pull up the trap-door and get down, and if they could not, what then? Would she and Mabel never be found? The awfulness of this thought swept everything but one desire from her thoughts; the desire to get out of that cubby-hole. The ladder, small though it was, they had gotten up with great difficulty. In her panic Mildred began to be perfectly sure that they could never get it down, even if they could get the trap-door open. She, too, began to hear creepy little noises, to

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imagine that bright little eyes were peering at her through the darkness.

"Mabel!" she whispered, "we've got to get down, if we can, but I'm afraid we can't!"

CHAPTER XVII

MILDRED AND MABEL

MISS ABITHA came into the girls' chamber for one more search for her missing visitors. The room had been looked through very carefully earlier in the afternoon. At that time Miss Abitha had searched under the bed, in the deep closet; every possible place that could conceal a small girl had been peered into without trace of them. But as the evening shadows deepened and the girls were still missing Miss Abitha resolved to look through the house once more.

As she opened the door of the room she heard muffled cries, and sounds coming from the cubby-hole over the room.

"My soul!" she exclaimed. "I do believe those children are up in the cubby-hole. How did they ever get up there, and how will they ever get down?"

She set the small lamp on the table and went directly under the trap-door, and then called "Mildred! Mabel!"

Two indistinct voices joined in response.

"It is Miss Abitha," she continued, and this time Mildred's voice could be clearly distinguished in reply:

" Yes'm!"

"I want you to move well away from the trap-door," Miss Abitha called in clear tones. "I am going to open it."

"Yes'm," came the response, and Miss Abitha grasped the cord and pulled carefully, watching the door rise into the tiny attic.

Mildred and Mabel peered down at her, their faces looking more drawn and white than ever in the shadowy light.

"We can't get the ladder down, I know we can't," said Mildred in a tearful voice. "The trap-door wedges it back so we can't get at it."

Miss Abitha looked up at them. "I think there are mice up there," she remarked in her usual tone, quite as if it was an every-day affair for her to discover two small girls peering at her through a trap-door.

"Yes'm. Yes, Miss Abitha, we are 'most sure there are," exclaimed Mabel tearfully. "I have heard them jumping about."

"Well, well! I must see about getting a nice likely kitten," said Miss Abitha, turning toward the door

quite as if she were starting in pursuit of the kitten that very instant.

"Miss Abitha! Miss Abitha!" called the girls.
"We want to come down."

Miss Abitha stopped and looked back.

"I will tell your aunt," she responded pleasantly, and the chamber door closed behind her. But she had left the lamp. The girls could see the bright spot it made in the room beneath them, and now they were not so terrified and dismayed. But they were very uncomfortable, and Miss Abitha's disappearance left them puzzled.

"Do you suppose that she is going to let us stay up here forever and ever?" whimpered Mabel. "I don't believe Aunt Frances would care if she did. She probably hopes we are lost so she can go South and not bother about us. Oh, dear!" and Mabel's whimper ended in sobs.

Mildred's arm encircled her younger sister protectingly. "Don't cry," she said. "We will get down somehow. If no one comes to help us I'll swing myself down by my hands and then drop. It won't be very far, and then I'll push the table under the door and you can step right down, just as easy."

This sounded very hopeful, and Mabel stopped crying

and suggested that they should not wait any longer, but descend at once. Mildred was about to carry her plan into execution when they heard steps in the hall-way. The chamber door again opened and their Aunt Frances appeared.

"Oh!" gasped Mildred as she looked down at her; for Mrs. Alexander's face was very stern as she advanced toward the aperture in the ceiling where her nieces looked down at her.

"I have a great mind to let you stay up there," she announced.

"There!" whispered Mabel. "I knew she would."

"Here I am with my plans all made to start tomorrow, and everything arranged for your good, and you hide yourselves away like this. What did you do it for?"

"We thought perhaps you'd go without us, and we could stay with Miss Abitha, and grow up like Eunice and Miss Constance," faltered Mildred, leaning over the edge a little farther in order to get a better look at her aunt's face, and discover, if possible, just what that lady would think of this explanation.

"Of all things in the world!" exclaimed Mrs. Alexander; but before she could say more the door again swung open and Miss Abitha appeared bringing a step-

ladder, which she proceeded to set up under the trapdoor.

Mabel came down first, her face tear-stained and woebegone, but as she felt her aunt's arms clasp her warmly and heard Mrs. Alexander whisper, "You dear child, I've been worried nearly to death," her own face brightened and she began to think that perhaps Aunt Frances did care after all. Mildred, too, looked at her aunt wonderingly; for she was quite sure there were tears on the lady's cheeks.

"Supper is waiting," announced Miss Abitha smilingly.

"I'll take the girls into my room and brush them up a little," said Mrs. Alexander.

"That cubby-hole must be dusty," Miss Abitha agreed, and Mildred and Mabel followed their aunt across the tiny hallway to her room. As she bathed their faces, brushed their hair and made them tidy again, Aunt Frances told them of her decision: that they were to remain at Miss Abitha's, and that it was possible that several of their old schoolmates might also be there.

"And Miss Constance is to be our teacher!" exclaimed Mildred joyfully. "I'm so glad. And you'll be glad to leave us, won't you, Aunt Frances?" Their aunt began to wonder if, after all, she was not going to miss these serious-faced children whose education was such a problem to her, but she made no reply, and the three went down to Miss Abitha's cozy dining-room for the belated evening meal.

Miss Abitha had told Eunice that it would be better not to mention to Mildred or Mabel that they had been missed at all.

"Not just yet, anyway," Miss Abitha explained.

"They are so delighted that they are to be Constance's pupils, and stay here for the winter, that we won't shadow their first days with blame."

Eunice had nodded understandingly. Her own foolish runaway had been treated in the same wise manner, and she was old enough to appreciate that it was the best way.

"Constance, you seem perfectly happy, and here your only sister is going away in two days!" Eunice exclaimed laughingly, as the two sisters started for a walk to the village.

"I am happy," said Constance, linking her arm in Lamb's. "I do believe I was intended for a teacher, and ever since that first term at Miss Wilson's school I have wanted to teach."

"But Rose Mason promised to teach with you, and now she is married," replied Eunice, with a note of reproach in her voice at Rose's failure in keeping such a promise.

"I know," responded Constance, "but everything will come out all right. Clare Seymour is going to take my place at Miss Wilson's school. You must read her letter, Lamb. Just think how I began by being envious of her at school, trying to make myself popular to spite her, and all the time she was really wanting to be friendly, and now is one of my best friends. Perhaps she will come and teach in the 'Newman School' some day."

"Clare isn't Rose," said Lamb.

"No," agreed the elder girl. "Rose is really our other sister. No one would be just like Rose to us. But Clare is a good friend."

"I know every fence pole and stone wall to the village," said Lamb, as the sisters stopped beneath the big oak where Miss Abitha's clematis-twined "throne" still stood. "Do you remember the first time we came over it with Grandpa Newman? When he met us at the railway station, and we thought we could only spend the winter here?"

"Yes, I suppose we felt something the way Mildred and Mabel did when they climbed up into Miss Abitha's attic," responded Constance laughingly.

"That's just what I wanted to talk about," said Lamb. "You know when we were little girls we always thought we could run away from things we didn't like. I thought so until a very little time ago," and Lamb's face flushed deeply. "We ran away and hid in that old schoolhouse, you remember, Sister, when mother decided to send us to school; and now you are going to teach two girls just about as old as we were then." Constance nodded, and Lamb went on, her voice unusually serious:

"I have been thinking that perhaps I could teach them something before I go to school myself.

May I?"

"Of course you may. Tell me about it," and Constance's hand clasped Lamb's firmly.

"It's this. I want to tell them how much it hurts other people, people we love, when we do foolish things. When we are so selfish as just to think of our own hurts, and think if we can get rid of them it doesn't matter what way we take; and forget that we are hurting those who love us best, making them anxious and unhappy just as I made you all this summer."

Constance's clasp on Lamb's hand tightened, and the younger girl went on: "I am nearer their age, and

going to school myself, and I think I can make them see it just as I do. And then they will think about it when they are tempted just to think of what they want to do, and not of how much other people are going to suffer. May I try, Sister?"

For a moment Constance could not speak. She felt as if Lamb, her little sister, had grown into a woman. That she was no longer a wilful, careless child, but a girl looking for opportunities to help other girls; ready to use her own mistakes in order that others might not fall into the same errors.

"It will be fine, Lamb," she responded. "I'm so proud of you."

Lamb's face brightened. "Mutual, Miss Newman," she exclaimed. "I'll find a chance for a talk with Mildred before I go. I notice Mabel does exactly as she sees her sister do. And we must trot along, Sister. You know we promised mother that we would run in and see Mrs. Smith a moment," and Lamb gave an impatient little shrug at the prospect.

"It's on account of Carl," she explained in response to her sister's questioning look. "I know all his perfections by heart, but his mother has always discovered a new one to tell us about every time we see her."

Constance apparently had nothing to say to this, and

Lamb went on: "I don't believe I shall ever quite like Carl Smith. I can't forget how horrid he used to be to Jimmie. And Jimmie is worth a dozen of him."

"They are good friends now," said Constance. "I think Carl learned a lesson, beginning at that picnic, which he will always remember. He isn't the silly boy he was then."

"I should hope not," declared Lamb, "but he would be if you hadn't shown him just how silly he was."

"I think you helped, if I remember anything about it," responded Constance laughingly.

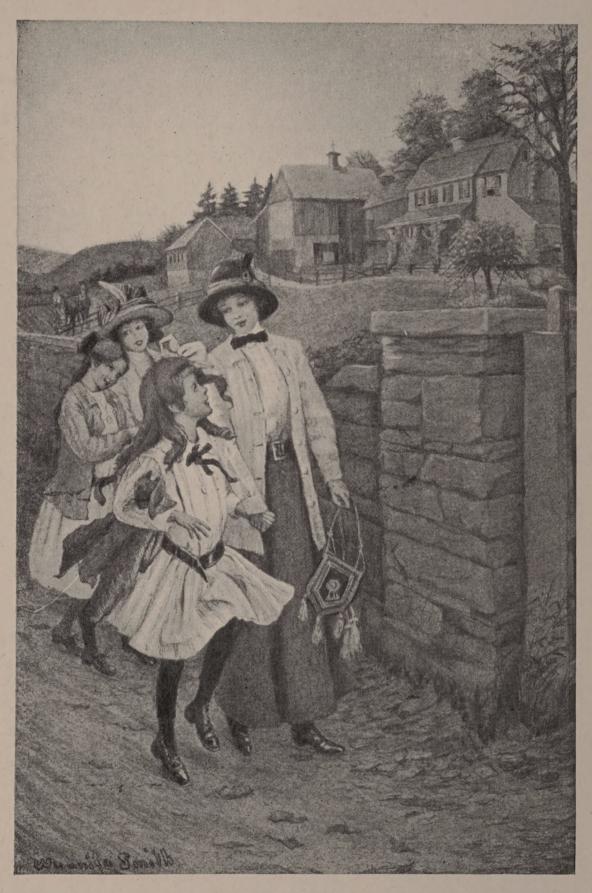
The girls did their errands in the village, made their call on Mrs. Smith and had nearly reached home when they saw two small figures coming along the road.

"Miss Abitha said we might come and meet you," called Mildred. Constance and Eunice looked at the little girls in surprise. They were skipping along as if they were too happy to walk, their eyes were bright, and their cheeks glowing. Mabel came close to Constance and looked up at her smilingly. "What are you going to teach me first?" she asked.

"To love your teacher," answered Constance.

"But we do now, don't we, Mildred?" declared the little girl.

Mildred and Eunice were behind, and Mabel said,



"WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO TEACH ME FIRST"



"Mildred is going to tell Eunice, and I am going to tell you. Aunt Frances is not going to start for home until after to-morrow. And to-morrow she is going to take your Grandpa and Grandma Newman and Miss Abitha and your father and mother on an automobile ride. And in the evening Miss Abitha is going to have a party for us. And will you go with us to ask Mary and Dannie Woodyear and their little brother and sister to come?" and Mabel drew a long breath, and looked up happily into her new friend's face.

"Yes, indeed I will," said Constance; "and you can't imagine what good times little girls have at Miss Abitha's parties."

"What do they do?" asked Mildred eagerly.

"Nobody ever knows until the time comes," replied Constance; "but it is always something that no one else but Miss Abitha would have thought of." And then Constance told Mabel of some of the good times that she and Eunice had had as little girls: of the potato party, the minstrel entertainment, the skeeing excursions, and many of the pleasures that their good friend had planned for them.

"And now," she concluded smilingly, "I can have all those good times over again with you and your sister."

"It seems almost too good to be true," said Mabel soberly. "You see," she explained, "Mildred and I have never had any good times."

Constance looked down tenderly at the slight little figure beside her, and resolved that she would try to be another "Miss Abitha" to the two little girls that chance had thrown into her care. It was the beginning of a tender friendship between the young girl and the homeless children which was to bring much happiness to them all.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE LAST PARTY

"MILDRED'S a dear," announced Eunice to Constance on their return from the walk, "and do you know, Sister, I really believe Mildred Prescott will be a wiser girl because I have been such a foolish one."

"It was fine of you to try and help her to wisdom by telling her of your mistakes," responded Constance.

Mildred was really very proud of the fact that Lamb had made her a confidante, and the first result of Mildred's thought over her own responsibility was in going to her aunt, greatly to that lady's astonishment, and explaining all the reasons that had made her persuade Mabel to climb into the cubby-hole. She took all the blame upon herself, and said how sorry she was for the trouble and anxiety she had caused her aunt.

"My dear girl," and Mrs. Alexander's voice actually trembled, "I would go through a good deal more trouble than you have ever caused me to discover what your words have just told me: that I have a niece I can trust as well as love," and Mildred was surprised by

the unexpected embrace, and by her aunt's tenderness toward Mabel and herself.

Mrs. Alexander felt sure that Mildred's new thoughtfulness was due to the influence of Eunice and Constance, and she began to feel grateful that the automobile had skidded at just the right point, and really thrown such good fortune in her way.

Miss Abitha wanted her party that evening to be one which Dannie Woodyear and Eunice would enjoy, and she was also desirous that Mildred and Mabel should have as good a time as possible. Dannie was to return to college the next day, and Eunice to Miss Wilson's school, so she felt that some special preparations should be made for the evening.

"We must keep away from Miss Abitha to-day, Lamb," Constance warned her sister laughingly, "and I think she would like it if we kept Mildred and Mabel away, too."

"What shall we do?" questioned Lamb. "You know this is my last day at home, and grandma has a big sign, 'No Admittance,' on her door."

"Suppose we tell Mildred and Mabel to put on thick boots and come with us for a walk, and then let's take a lunch and not come home until afternoon."

"That will be fine. Perhaps mother will go with

us," agreed Lamb. "I'll ask her, while you see if Mildred and Mabel want to go."

The younger girls were delighted that "Miss Constance" should include them in such an excursion, and Mrs. Alexander seemed well pleased.

"Just like your thoughtfulness, my dear girl," declared Miss Abitha, and, as Mrs. Newman was going with the girls, both Constance and Eunice thought it would be the most pleasant way to spend Eunice's last day at home; especially as all the other members of the family were occupied in arranging Miss Abitha's evening celebration.

"Where shall we go?" asked Lamb, as the little party walked across the smooth fields toward the tall pines.

"Let's go to the place where grandpa took us for our first winter picnic when we were little girls," suggested Constance. The others agreed, and as they walked along Eunice told Mildred and Mabel of the Indian wigwam Mr. Eben Bean had built that day, and of their dolls Jabezza and Betty, and promised to point out a tall tree which Constance had climbed when she was no older than Mabel.

They soon came into the roadway which skirted the grove, Constance and her mother leading the way. The road led to a sort of glen, shut in on one side by high

ledges, and bordered on the other by a thick forest growth.

"It's lovely," exclaimed Mildred, as she looked at moss-covered rocks, and noticed the beautiful October sunshine filtering in shining threads through the branches of the tall trees.

"That is just what we thought years ago, and what we shall always think," responded Constance.

Mrs. Newman had brought the luncheon basket, and Lamb carried a large package.

"What is in that package, Eunice?" her mother asked, as they made preparations for lunch.

"It's our dolls, Jabezza and Betty," replied Lamb.
"You know they have been put away in the attic for a long time, and I thought Sister wouldn't care if I gave them to these little girls. They haven't any, and from what Mildred says I don't think that they ever had."

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Mrs. Newman.

"Why, mother! What is the matter?" and both the tall girls looked anxiously toward her.

"Lamb wants to give away her doll," Mrs. Newman whispered in Constance's ear, and then, clasping an arm of each daughter she looked smilingly into their faces. "The time has really come. My little girls are really grown up," she said.

"Aren't you glad of it, mother dear?" said Lamb.

"I don't really know," responded Mrs. Newman a little plaintively. "You were such dear little girls."

"But here are two more dear little girls," said Constance, turning smilingly toward her future pupils, "ready to take our dolls, and to do all the nice things we used to do."

Mildred and Mabel looked at Mrs. Newman a little questioningly. They had never known what a real home was like; that a real mother should be ready to accept them they could hardly believe, but Mrs. Newman's tender smile reassured them.

"Yes, they shall be my little girls," she declared, "now that my very own are my grown-up girls." And when Lamb gave Jabezza to Mildred and Betty to Mabel, they both were sure that they were the most fortunate girls in the world. Later on, as they ate the good things from the luncheon basket, they were equally sure that nothing had ever tasted so good.

"We might take home some red partridge-berries and autumn leaves," suggested Constance. "Miss Abitha will be glad to have them, I know." So they busied themselves in collecting bunches of wonderful scarlet leaves from the sumac bushes, and Constance showed

Mildred how to get the partridge vine without pulling it up by its roots and destroying it.

Mrs. Newman kept very close to Lamb. She could not forget that her young daughter would be going away the next day, and they were both glad that they had Miss Abitha's party to talk of and wonder about.

Miss Abitha and Mrs. Alexander were very busy all that morning and afternoon, and by the time the picnickers returned many of the preparations for the evening were completed. Apparently Miss Abitha had not taken any one into her confidence, for Grandpa and Grandma Newman both declared that they had not the faintest idea of what the evening's entertainment would be.

Dannie Woodyear said that all he knew about it was that Miss Abitha had sent him to the village to purchase four tack-hammers. What Miss Abitha could want of four tack-hammers was more than the girls could imagine. When they went into the sitting-room they found, on the big round table, a note addressed to each of them. They were invitations to spend the evening with Miss Abitha Bean, and each guest was requested to bring an apron.

"I suppose she expects grandpa and father to wear aprons!" exclaimed Eunice.

"That is what she says in her note," responded her father, "so we shall expect you to provide us with the best aprons you have."

"It's going to be great fun, whatever it is. I'm sure of that," declared Eunice. "Miss Abitha's parties are always something no one would have thought of."

"Aunt Frances is having just as good a time as we are," declared Mabel. "I believe I'll be sorry to have her go," and she looked toward her sister as if she expected some expression of disapproval at her strange statement; for, in the past, Mrs. Alexander's little nieces had regarded her as the stern authority who sent them to school, bought their clothes, and made them feel as if they were her special trial. But since they had come to Pine Tree Farm she began to seem "like an aunt," as Mildred expressed it, and the girls had responded quickly to her interest and affection.

Miss Abitha's appetizing supper was appreciated by all the company, but there was an evident eagerness on the part of the younger guests to know what would follow, and when Miss Abitha asked them all to follow her to the sitting-room no one loitered behind.

The usual sitting-room furniture had been removed. There were three small tables set in a row. On the first were several tiny squares of thin brass, four tackhammers, and sharp, pointed brads for piercing the metal. On each of the brass squares was traced a simple design. Four larger squares of soft wood were also on the table, so that the pounding of the brass would not injure the table.

Miss Abitha led Mary Woodyear, Mildred, Dannie, and Grandma Newman to this table.

"The finest piece of work will receive a prize," she announced seriously, and then conducted Mabel Prescott, Mrs. Alexander, Jimmie Woodyear and Constance to the next table. Here were found four small sharp knives, and four medium-sized potatoes.

"This," said Miss Abitha, "is the carving table. The artist of the best carved animal will be rewarded suitably."

The third table was spread with a dainty cover and round it were ranged comfortable chairs, and here Mr. and Mrs. Henry Newman, Grandpa Newman, Nurse Loring and Eunice were seated. On the table were tiny baskets of woven grass; each basket contained a small square of linen, on which was outlined a rose, a threaded embroidery needle, a pair of scissors and a thimble.

"An evening of useful arts," said Miss Abitha. "In fifteen minutes I shall examine the work at each table.

Then two from each table will go and try their hand at some other art. I will tell you when to begin and when to stop. I will now count three. When I say three, you must all begin. One! Two! Three!"

At the word "three" the four tack-hammers sounded briskly. Grandpa Newman tried to get a firm grasp on the tiny square of linen, and Mrs. Alexander was valiantly attacking her potato. No one spoke for a moment, then a little giggle from Lamb, who was watching her father's efforts to keep hold of his embroidery needle, was echoed by Mildred and Mabel, and there were laughing exclamations, and the first fifteen minutes ended with several unfinished patterns.

Miss Abitha examined each piece of work, and every one was eager to see what the others had accomplished.

"Look at father's!" exclaimed Eunice; "he has only taken two stitches."

"All the fault of this needle, my dear," her father assured her. "It took all my time to keep it threaded."

At the potato table Constance had carved what Mabel Prescott declared was "a perfectly beautiful pig." Mrs. Alexander had attempted a giraffe, but had succeeded only in completing the head and neck when she discovered that she had used up her potato. Mabel had carved a dog and Jimmie's figure of a horse was

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easily recognized. The brass-workers had all finished pounding out their patterns, and all were very much pleased with their handiwork. As they changed from table to table, each one attempting a new "craft," there was more laughter; and Mrs. Alexander declared that she had a great mind not to go away at all.

"I should really like to live here," she said, "for I don't know when I have laughed so much."

The prizes awarded were the pieces of completed work, and Grandma Newman proudly carried home Constance's carved pig; while Mrs. Alexander received the square of brass on which Mildred had hammered out a star, and said she should always value it.

"It's too bad to have such a good time on my last night at Pine Tree Farm," said Eunice; "it makes it all the harder to go away."

"Your mother has consented to let me take you as far as Miss Wilson's to-morrow," said Mrs. Alexander. "My way takes me very near the school, and it will be pleasant for me to have your company."

"Oh, thank you very much," responded Eunice; "to go away with you will make it easier."

Mrs. Alexander nodded approvingly. "A very pretty and gracious way to accept an invitation, my

dear," she said. "I am hoping my girls will take pattern after you and your sister in many ways."

Eunice flushed at the unexpected praise, and was pleased at the prospect of going in the smooth-running machine over the pleasant country roads instead of in the close cars on the railway; and as she and Constance reached home after the happy evening she told her sister of the kind invitation.

"Yes," said Constance, "and Dannie goes with you as far as Portland. Mrs. Alexander seems to want to do something for everybody. She has written a number of letters to her friends telling them about the beginning of the 'Newman School,' and it is very likely I shall have other pupils besides Mildred and Mabel."

"Everything does work out right, doesn't it?" responded Eunice.

CHAPTER XIX

THE YOUNG TEACHER

It was a perfect October morning when the big automobile stopped at Miss Abitha's door, and Mrs. Alexander came out to enter it and say good-bye to her small nieces. Mildred and Mabel had never experienced so many emotions in so short a time.

"Isn't it funny that we feel sorry to have Aunt Frances go?" Mildred said. "Of course we don't want to go with her, but if she should stay here I really believe I'd have a better time."

"It is funny," agreed Mabel, "because we always used to be glad to see the last of her; but now she seems to feel sorry to leave us, and I guess that's one reason why we are sorry to have her go."

"And it is lovely that she is going to let us stay here," said Mildred. "Just suppose that we were going off in that machine this morning!" And the two sisters regarded each other in dismay at the very suggestion of such a misfortune.

"Well, we seem to feel glad and sorry too," decided Mabel, and Mildred agreed to this statement. At Pine Tree Farm Eunice and Constance were having their good-bye talk.

"Jimmie Woodyear is going to write to me while I am away," Eunice announced suddenly. "He said last night that there would be a good many things happen that he would like to tell me about. He never wrote to me when I was away before."

For a moment Constance did not answer, then she said quietly: "Well, Lamb, Dannie has written to us ever since he went away to college."

"But Jimmie is so much older. Why, he is older than you, Sister."

"Yes," agreed Constance. "Jimmie is grown up, too; and he is a dear good boy just the same."

Eunice laughed happily. "Well, Sister, I haven't heard you praise him since that horrid picnic. Do you think I'd better tell mother that he is going to write to me?"

"Of course," replied the elder girl in so matter-offact a voice that Eunice wondered why she should have thought to ask.

"I'm going back to school with a lot of good resolves," Eunice continued.

"I hope one resolve is to like Carl Smith a little better," said Constance laughingly. "Since he painted that big stable, and shingled the piazza you must own that he is ready to work."

"Yes, and he's found out that the Woodyears are just as good as he is," rejoined Eunice good-naturedly. "I was going to tell you about all my noble ideas, about being a lot like my big sister and all that, but apparently you don't want to hear."

"You look out and avoid big sister's mistakes, and you'll be a credit to the family," responded Constance laughingly.

There was not time for any further confidences between the sisters, for their father was waiting for a talk with Eunice, and Dannie could be seen coming across the fields with his sister, and in a few moments the travelers were all on board the car, and it rolled smoothly down the driveway and disappeared round the curve in the road.

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Constance in so doleful a tone that Mildred and Mabel turned toward her in surprise.

"I'm not going to cry, girlies," she assured them, but if you were not here I should be tempted to."

"Then I'm glad we're here," said Mildred shyly.

But there was a good deal to occupy Constance's time and thoughts, and prevent her from thinking too often of the absent sister. Miss Abitha had received a letter from one of Mrs. Alexander's friends asking if the "Newman School" could receive her young daughter, a girl of twelve, and Constance began to realize that her plan was becoming a reality.

"We shall have to build the schoolhouse I promised you," Grandpa Newman said laughingly.

"Indeed you will," said Constance. "I shall expect you to begin it another spring."

Mildred and Mabel were not to begin their lessons until the following week, and they wandered about the farm, visited the little Woodyears, and every little while reported to "Miss Newman," as Constance was now quite used to being called. On the Saturday after Eunice's departure Constance had promised to drive them to the village in the pony cart. "Mildred may drive Jet going to the village, and Mabel shall drive home," she had promised them, and the girls were delighted, as neither of them had ever driven a pony.

"We'll be all ready and waiting whenever you are," they told Constance, so when she stopped the pony at Miss Abitha's gate she expected to see them come running out in response to her call. But although she called several times they did not come. Miss Abitha came to the door.

[&]quot;Aren't those girls ready?" asked Constance.

"They were ready half an hour ago," replied Miss Abitha. "I thought they were here at the front gate waiting for you. Probably they are up-stairs. I'll call them."

But Miss Abitha's calls brought no answer. And a thorough search of the house did not discover them.

"Not in the cubby-hole again, are they?" questioned Constance laughingly. "Well, I might as well take Jet back to the stable. We can go this afternoon. But I don't see where they are!"

"They will soon appear, and be sorry enough to have lost the ride," Miss Abitha assured her, and Constance turned Jet's head back toward the comfortable stable, and went to her own room to look over the lessons she was preparing for her pupils.

In the attic of Pine Tree Farm Mildred and Mabel were peering out of the pleasant southern window as Constance drove into the stable yard.

"It's all your fault," Mildred whispered, as they crouched down on the broad settle near the window. "You had no business to come rummaging through Miss Newman's house."

"You were willing enough to come with me," retorted Mabel. "I knew Miss Newman wouldn't care; she has said two or three times that some day we could

come up to the lookout room, and I thought we should have just time this morning. And it would have been all right if that old lock hadn't snapped to. The key must be up here somewhere."

"We'll probably have to stay here and starve to death," said Mildred gloomily, "for I'd rather starve than have Miss Newman know that we had come into her house and right up-stairs without asking."

"I shan't starve. I shall go and beat on that door and call and call until they come and let us out," said Mabel calmly.

"Well, Mabel Prescott! Haven't you any pride at all?" demanded her sister. "They will all despise us for being here."

"I had rather be despised than starve," persisted Mabel. "I'm going to shake that door and holler now, before I get hungry."

"No, you are not," declared Mildred, putting her hand firmly over her sister's mouth. "You wait. I'll find a way to get out without hollering."

"You'll have to hurry then," Mabel said, "for if I begin to feel a mite hungry I shall pound and holler," and she looked at her sister defiantly.

Mildred crept carefully about the big attic, but there was no way of escape. She sank down on the floor and

began to cry. "We are always getting into trouble," she whimpered, "and I know just what will happen now. Miss Newman won't have us for pupils. And everything is lovely here, and they were all beginning to like us. Now they will write for Aunt Frances to come and take us right away. You see if they don't."

Mabel felt that her sister was probably right, and that they must either resign themselves to starvation or else be banished forever from Pine Tree Farm; and at the thought she quite forgot the need for complete silence and began to cry loudly.

"You've done it now," said Mildred, but the younger girl's cries grew louder, and in a moment there was a rattling of the attic door, a sound of steps on the stairs, and Grandma Newman appeared in the "Lookout."

"For pity sake!" she exclaimed. "What is the matter?"

"I don't want to starve! I don't want to starve!" Mabel sobbed, and Mildred scrambled to her feet, wiped her eyes, and as grandma's arm drew her close she managed to tell the whole story.

"There wasn't a mite of harm in your coming up here, not a mite," grandma assured them. "Our girls fixed up the room on purpose for us all to enjoy, and I know Constance would be glad to have you come here." "But we ought to have asked," said Mildred.

"Well, perhaps it would have been just as well," agreed Grandma Newman. "But now dry your eyes, and come right down with me, and I'll tell Constance that you are all ready to go to the village."

With a small girl clinging to each hand grandma appeared at Constance's door. "Here are your two passengers," said Grandma Newman.

"Why, where have you been?" said Constance pleasantly, laying aside her books. She was somewhat surprised at the result of her simple inquiry. Mabel looked at Mildred pleadingly, Mildred's face grew anxious and worried, and neither made any response to Constance's inquiry.

"Well, you see, my dear," began Grandma Newman, "Mildred and Mabel were in the attic; the door swung to, and they didn't know about pushing back the little catch, so they couldn't get out until I heard them and opened the door."

At this explanation Mabel's face brightened, but Mildred did not seem quite satisfied; and even when they had started for the village and she was holding the reins over Jet, her face did not brighten. On the way home she said suddenly:

"Miss Newman, I know that Mabel and I ought not

to have gone up in your attic alone; we ought to have waited until you asked us."

Constance's first impulse was to say, "Never mind, it's all right," but remembering that in the future these girls would decide upon such questions very much in accordance with her own decisions, she replied:

"I am quite sure that I should have asked you to-day if you had thought to speak of it to me."

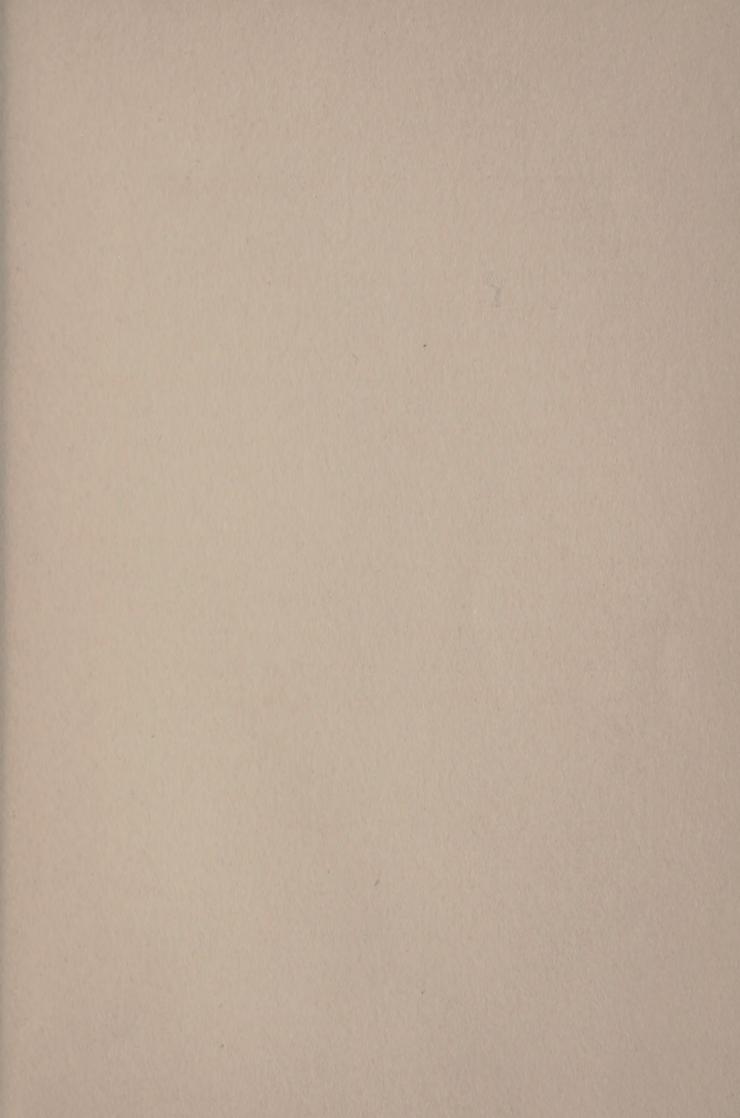
There was a brief silence, and then both the girls exclaimed:

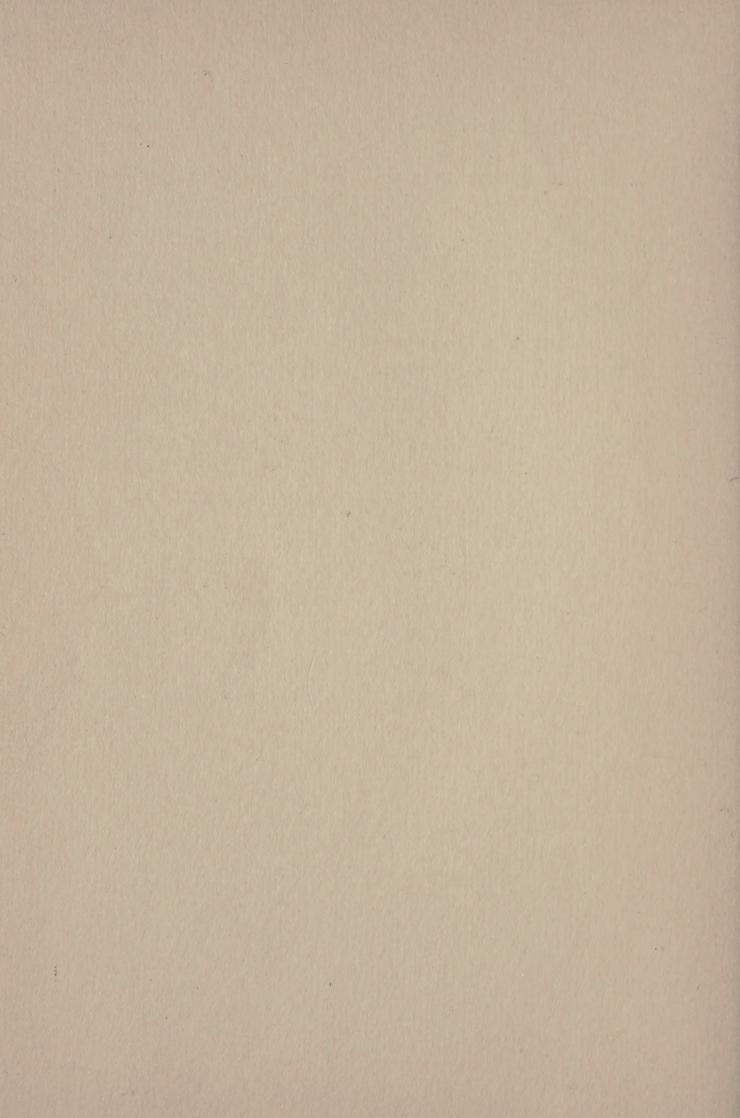
"We will ask you next time."

"That's right," replied the young teacher in as serious a voice as she could command, and Mildred smiled happily, and was now ready to enjoy the ride. Mabel "chirruped" encouragingly to Jet, and the troubles of the morning were quite forgotten as the fat pony carried them briskly along toward Pine Tree Farm.

Other Stories in this Series are:

GRANDPA'S LITTLE GIRLS
GRANDPA'S LITTLE GIRLS AT SCHOOL
GRANDPA'S LITTLE GIRLS AND THEIR FRIENDS
GRANDPA'S LITTLE GIRLS' HOUSE-BOAT PARTY
GRANDPA'S LITTLE GIRLS AND MISS ABITHA







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